

RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

No. 8

MAY 1995

ISSN 1039-5180

REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Many of our readers and clients will be aware that a range of initiatives for the administration of NTAS and for the advancement of records management in the Territory public sector have been proposed for consideration by the Government.

Consideration of these issues has been deferred pending separate discussions about the various costs and means by which government agencies can store their secondary records. We are still hopeful of gaining support for initiatives involving the following :

- The compilation of a general Territory keyword thesaurus for use in our registries.
- A project to assist agencies with the appropriate criteria to determine disposal of their records.
- Consideration of standards and career structures for records management personnel.

We are mindful that many of our clients have been waiting on a decision about these initiatives for some time and we will endeavour to advise them accordingly as soon as possible.

Greg Coleman
Principal Archivist



added

EDITORIAL —

ON THE ROAD AGAIN !

The majority of our readers will be aware that the NTAS recently moved from the Myilly Point location. The beautiful monitor lizards whose ranks swelled to three when last seen at Myilly Point will be missed.

In keeping with this tradition we will be picking up our belongings and taking off again in a few months. Have no fear, we will advise you when and where we are going and how you will still be able to benefit from our services.

We really are a resilient lot.

Future advertisements for archivists in NTAS will probably make reference to the need to be adventurous, creative in designing work-space, resilient, desensitized to eviction, able to pack and label at short notice, have implicit faith and trust in removalists and their ability to deliver the goods etc., etc.

Our staff fridge is unlike most other office fridges. We have no dead food fragments, forgotten fruit and sandwiches long past their lifetime of safe nutrition. A fridge has to be cleaned out prior to removal!

Notices were circulated prior to our move, but, for those of you who have not seen the notice please refer to the inserted location map.

Our point of contact, administration, lending services and research facility are now located on the 5th floor, Capricornia House, 21 Lindsay Street, Darwin.

It looks like we will be in the above premises for several months after which it is expected we will take up residence, complete with the archives, in our "permanent" home. More about that in a later edition though.

Linda Bell, Archivist (Records Services) was Acting Principal Archivist while Greg was recently on holidays (he tells us his Indonesian has improved considerably).

The task of organizing our move to Capricornia House fell to Linda. Thanks to her skill and experience in this area the move went very smoothly.

Information about preservation of cultural materials, which includes documentary heritage, is a new addition to *Records Territory*. We hope you find this column of interest and value. If you have a special area of interest in preservation please let us know.

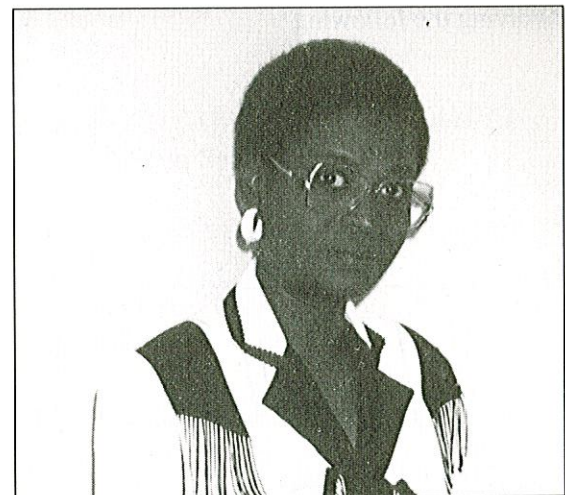


Diane Foster
Editor

STAFF NOTES

As promised, in our last newsletter, a photo of our most recent staff member, Abimbola (Abi) Adepoiyi. Abi is our Archivist (Information Services) on temporary transfer from Construction Agency and replaces Jenni Wright who is on maternity leave.

Abi adds flair to our office environment when she comes to work in her traditional, colourful costume.



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DISPOSAL SCHEDULES



FINANCE RECORDS

Over the past two months government departments were approached for their assistance in conducting a survey of records created within their finance departments. Eighteen visits were made and thirteen returns were subsequently received.

As with any records retention and disposal schedule, it is necessary to first survey the records to determine what is being created.

This particular survey is very timely considering the new Financial Management Act and the new Treasurer's Directions soon to be legislated. Reference will be made in the Directions to the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS) *General Disposal Schedule Finance Records* which will be the instruction for correct disposal of government finance records.

Our sincere and grateful thanks to the relevant staff in the finance departments who responded to the survey.

Draft copies will be distributed for comment and training sessions will be held at a later date to be advised.

Diane Foster
Archivist (Records Policy)



PATIENT RECORDS

In July last year the NT Archives Service and the Department of Health & Community Services issued the General Disposal Schedule for Patient Records in Public Hospitals and Community Health Centres.

The Schedule prescribes minimum periods for the retention of patient records maintained by hospitals and health centres throughout the Territory.

Further concerns have been expressed by representatives of the Menzies School of Health Research and other medical personnel about the need to retain medical information for much longer than is prescribed in the Schedule. The immediate concern about the retention of patient records is that there are so many of them and it is expensive to store them.

As a consequence of these conflicting concerns, all hospitals and health centres have been notified that the Schedule is to be placed on 'hold' until after the Menzies School has reviewed the situation with regard to storage of patient records and the potential criteria for culling and retaining various classes of medical records. The Schedule is due to be reconsidered after the Menzies School has completed this review in June.



THE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT COMPUTER SYSTEM

We are rather excited that at long last we can commence implementation and development of the software for the Archives and Records Management System which was designed by NCOM about three years ago.

The project will be completed during 1995/96 by NCOM, thanks to a major financial contribution from the Conservation Commission and various contributions from our client government agencies.

Some redefinition work needs to be done due to the time which has elapsed since design of the system, but this should be minimal as the original review of NTAS and client requirements was exhaustive.

The system will provide on-line public access to information about the NTAS and its records holdings and it will allow client agencies to conduct record transfers and lending transactions and to access information about their records across the NT Government network. Not only will the system help us to administer and service the increasing demands on the NTAS, but it will provide a hugely improved ability to access records and to know what information is held in collections.

It will take a couple of years for the system to be fully operational as there is a huge amount of data input work to be completed. This will be done in stages depending upon the level of support and assistance which we can gain from our clients.



PRESERVATION.

Burning in your Drawers, Cabinets and Other Places

Introduction

Sometime ago I watched a video called *"Slow Fires"*. It was about modern paper and how it is slowly deteriorating because of high acid content and other ingredients added in the paper-making process.

When you think about the paper based documents created by governments, letters and various writings that we create as individuals we rarely think about how long we would wish them to remain. But, when it comes to a time to seek out the written word from days gone by we are often confronted by the degradation of the paper in its fragile state. We realise how vulnerable our past is and lament about the vanishing memories which may have become so precious to us over the intervening years.

Since governments and non-Aboriginal Australians generally do not have an Oral History tradition which is practised, honed and fine tuned through the centuries to reflect our culture, beliefs and socialization, our individual and collective memory reaches a time when it may fade away, or, at best become fragmented.

Paper Problems

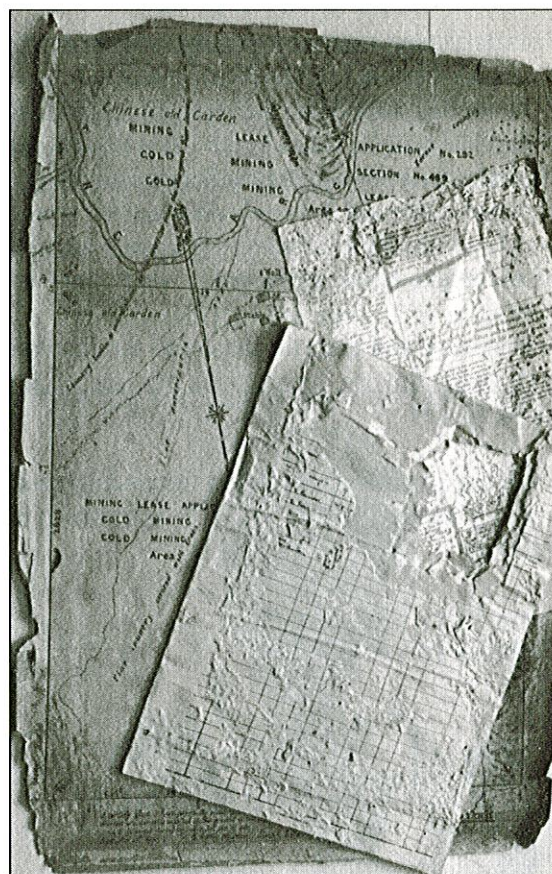
Our documentary heritage is burning away in a *slow fire*. The previous mentioned video is a good introduction to the problem and gives some insight into how the problem can be remedied.

Whenever we are creating and using paper based information it would be fruitful to consider not only the intent but the significance as well. It does not really matter if the document is created in a work or personal situation. If we intend it to remain as a record of what went before, or as a memory with some possible future interest, then we should consider the fabric the word is recorded upon.

Until recent years, paper manufactured post mid-eighteen fifties has a relatively short life, between ten to fifty years. People of middle-age will realise this is not long!

Our favourite childhood story books will not last for us to share with our grandchildren, or if they do, they will rarely be able to be handled for long periods before the pages disintegrate into small pieces.

Surely it will be at least a couple of decades before we see only electronic books, documents etc., in use and the paper book, magazine and document completely redundant. Within a couple of decades the amount of information produced (new and rehashed) will be unmanageable - or so it seems if what I recently heard at a meeting is true, "... the amount of information produced today doubles every two weeks".



Crumbling documents on acidic paper further damaged by water, heat and insects.

Permanency

There are three separate issues here, the amount of information produced, the need to be selective about what we decide to keep AND what we decide to keep the "permanent" information on.

Obviously, the "permanent" information is selected from the whole and the selection process is known in the archive profession as appraisal. This leads to retention and disposal schedules which assist government departments in deciding what to keep and what to destroy. This process, can of course, be transposed into our personal records keeping.

It makes sense to consider the intent of permanency when creating a new document. If *permanency* is the decision and the intent is to leave a *record* then permanent or acid-free paper (as it is sometimes referred to as) should be used. It is suitable for use in photocopy machines and computer printers. Recycled or regular type paper is ideal for records or information not required past ten years.

Somewhere between 2% - 10% of government records fall into the "past ten year category" as do family letters and documents, authors jottings, drafts and final manuscripts, depending on the significance you or others place upon them.

Today, permanent paper is comparative in price to good quality paper. As the use of permanent paper increases so will the ability to readily purchase.

The notion of permanency is relevant to documents/records produced electronically, to audio-visual disks and tapes and photographs too - but more about that in a later issue of *Records Territory*.

It is not too late to safeguard records produced on ordinary paper. Measures can be taken to slow down the degradation of paper and these will be addressed in our next issue of *Records Territory*.

Lamination

A brief word about lamination – DON'T DO IT – to anything you want to last. The term lamination needs qualifying. When I say don't do it I mean the kind which is a layer of plastic applied with an adhesive substance and sealed with very high heat. The document or photograph will not last for posterity, rather it will degrade more quickly. This process is not reversible, which is the key word when it comes to any method of preservation or conservation.

Laminating, of the kind mentioned above, is ideal for copies and especially in the display situation.

It should be noted that the term lamination is applied in the conservation/preservation world too, but the materials used do not damage the document. Materials suitable for laminating and which are reversible are Japanese tissues, silk or thin muslin fixed to the document by acetate glue.

Documents should be deacidified before lamination and the whole process done by someone trained in the process.

The process is applied to give a document physical support and is completely reversible.

Diane Foster
Archivist (Records Policy)



Fragmenting acidic paper cleaned and ready for conservation work.

Note: the video "Slow Fires" should be available through the inter-library lending scheme. Bulk orders of Watermarked Permanent Copy Paper may be purchased at \$6.45/ream plus delivery from DAS Distribution on (06) 202 5536 or 202 5629.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

On Electronic Recordkeeping

As we advance towards the paper-less office (although many archivists and librarians believe this will never happen) our Disaster and Recovery Procedures must include what to do when a disaster occurs in the electronic data arena.

Clearly, it is an area for an IT professional. But, how many of us consider calling in the "experts" when a computer problem occurs? Often, the "resident computer buff" within the office is called upon. Sometimes the problem is fixed but do we run the danger of truly fixing it for good. Best call the computer expert and ask for help.

Think about your office procedures. Do you have in place the necessary procedures on what to do when a computer problem occurs?

NT HISTORY AWARDS

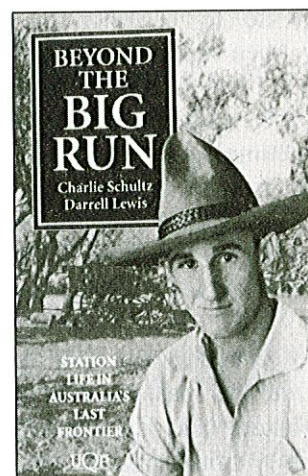
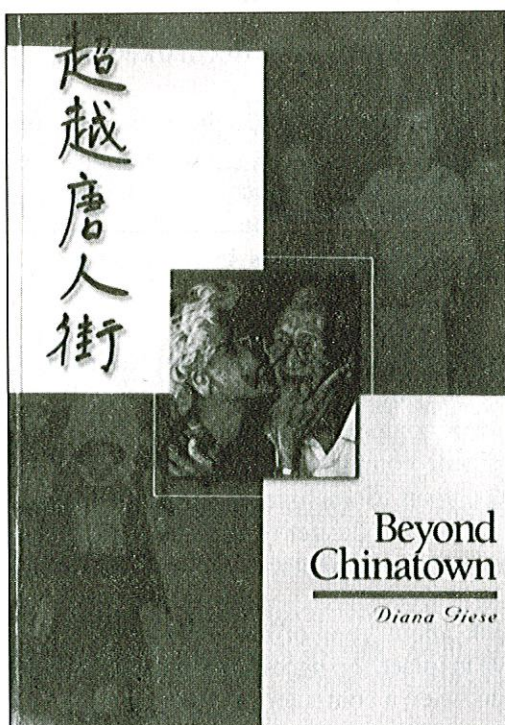
Applications for the 1995 NT History Awards closed on Friday 21 April. During May, the NT History Awards Committee will make its recommendations for this year's Awards to the NT Heritage Advisory Council for consideration by the Minister for Conservation.

It is expected that all applicants for the Awards will be advised of the outcome of their applications during June, prior to granting of the Awards in July. Grants will be awarded from a total fund of \$30,000.

With regard to previous Awards, we can report that recipients from past years have been busily finalising and publishing manuscripts. Judy Robinson from Alice Springs has produced a manuscript about the history of Ryans Well and the people who pioneered this area in Central Australia. Robyn Lindsay has also completed a manuscript about her work on the biography of Lena PangQuee, *Ngaguljali - A Territory Mother*.

BEYOND CHINATOWN

In the last edition of *Records Territory* we mentioned the forthcoming launch at Parliament House of Diana Giese's book, *Beyond Chinatown*. The launch of Diana's book about the changing perspectives on the Top End Chinese experience was a great success and the book is proving popular.



BEYOND THE BIG RUN

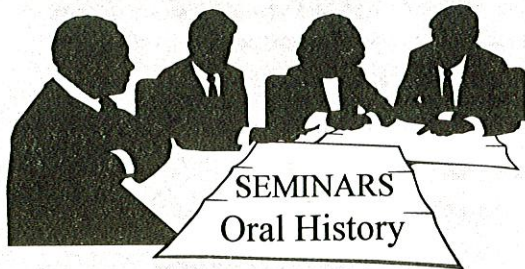
The latest publication which has received research assistance from the Awards scheme is the story of pastoral pioneer Charlie Schultz. *Beyond the Big Run*, which was written by Darrell Lewis, tells the fascinating story of Charlie's recollections of station life in the Victoria River District. The book has been published by Queensland University Press and was launched at the Stockmen's Hall of Fame in Longreach on 22 April.



RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Some of the projects recently or currently underway are as follows:

- Re-writing of PhD thesis into a book "*White flour white power*": a study of assimilation in central Australian history from 1870's to 1970's / Tim Rowse.
- The history of Northern Territory University and its antecedent organisation / Baiba Berzins and Peter Loveday.
- PhD research of the Methodist Mission and Aboriginal Churches in Arnhem Land / John Kadiba.
- History of Gurinji people and Daguragu Station / Minon Kokari, Japan.
- Oral history of Garden Point - "*The Stolen Generation*" / Sonia Smallacombe.
- PhD research on the history of Pine Creek / Jane Bathgate.



Oral History Unit

In April last year, NTAS mounted a very successful oral history seminar and workshop in Darwin. This year we followed up with: an evening workshop in Darwin for a small group from the Aboriginal Studies Unit at the Northern Territory University in late March; a seminar and three workshops in Alice Springs in April; and in May joined a workshop/seminar mounted by the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT (MAGNT) at Bullocky Point in Darwin.

The response from Alice Springs was nearly overwhelming. Over forty people turned up to a three-hour evening presentation on 19 April by invited speakers. **Greg Coleman** spoke about NT Archives' responsibilities; **Francis Good** elaborated on Archives' oral history collection and assistance provided to researchers; **David Hugo** described his interview work with Centralian mica miners, mostly Italians, as part of his doctoral studies; a delegation from the **Warlpiri Media Centre** at Yuendumu described their concerns about the difficulties they have in recording, preserving and locating oral history and other records for their community; **Dr Tim Rowse** discussed both the limitations and unique properties of the oral record in research for and the writing of social history.

Finally, **Ushma Scales**, an anthropologist with the Pitjantjatjara Council, spoke about the search in libraries and other collections for material relating to the Pitjantjatjara, and the use of digital technology for collecting and accessing photos and other material. The search for records has led to the recording of some oral histories with elders identified in youthful photographs. Of particular interest is the work being done on development of protocols, particularly in conjunction with the Mortlock Library in Adelaide, which will facilitate access to Aboriginal materials held in institutions in a way that is sensitive to Aboriginal values and cultural requirements — at present access to such material is often kept back because of uncertainty as to how it should be handled without giving offence or infringing the rights of traditional owners.

Following this, still in Alice Springs, a day-time workshop on "how to" specifics was presented for people brought together by the Institute for Aboriginal Development, some of whom are keen to start on projects such as the history of ex-residents of 'The Bungalow'; and a morning workshop was also given for the visitors from Yuendumu.

Then, on Saturday 22 April, 23 people registered for a full-day workshop which had been given radio and newspaper publicity in the Alice.

Topics included:

- oral history as published, and the editorial considerations that form this material out of the original interview;
- defining, in contrast, the research-based, planned interview, and the ethical guidelines of the Oral History Association that should closely mould the whole process of creating oral records;
- project planning and logistics; interview questioning technique; transcription and other documentation;
- the practicalities of tape recording.

David Hugo returned for this workshop and gave a very useful description of how he analysed his research topic as the basis of working out the detail for questions he needed to put to his informants; and **Mark MacLean**, Publications Officer with the Institute for Aboriginal Studies (IAD), described the editorial considerations and rationale behind three of the books based primarily on oral history material which have been published by IAD in recent years.

The MAGNT seminar/workshop in Darwin on May 6 was attended by 25 people, and was organised as part of a National Estate Grant Program to document significant sites in the Northern Territory associated with the Chinese community. Speakers included **Dr Mickey Dewar** (MAGNT), introducing the program, its aim, funding etc.; noted Territory historian **Barbara James** talked about her personal experience of interviewing; **Associate Professor David Carment** of the Northern Territory University spoke on Chinese immigration to Australia, particularly the Northern Territory, and discussed sources; and **Barbara Pedersen**, of the Heritage Unit at the Conservation Commission of the NT spoke about sources and resources.

Francis Good gave three sessions on: the operation of the Oral History Unit at NTAS; ethics and practice of oral history, with a discussion of questioning techniques; and the mechanics of taping, transcription, copyright, and clearance.

Further oral history workshops may be held in both Darwin and Alice Springs later this year, but will have to be limited to participation by researchers who are either currently engaged in, or are actually planning specific interview projects. Anyone who feels they should be taking part in this kind of preparation are invited to call the Oral History Unit on 470 756 and register an expression of interest.

Francis Good
8 May 1995

* * *

Copyrighted Material

© COPYRIGHT

At a recent seminar, in Darwin, sponsored by the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (ACLIS) participants were led to consider the notion of ownership of knowledge.

Generally, non-Aboriginal people tend to think of collective information about our society as being public information and that access be readily available. There is assumed a right to public knowledge.

The speaker at the Seminar reminded or informed us that, to Aboriginal people, knowledge is not necessarily public information, regardless of who created the record.

Information resource centres may need to consider how they display material in the above context – whether it is subject to copyright or not.

Diane Foster
Archivist (Records Policy)

Copyrighted Material

WHERE TO FROM HERE? — OUR NEXT HOME

As mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter, the NTAS is still on the move. It is planned that the office, public search room and archives repository will be re-located to a long-term locality in the Darwin City area later this year. At the time of writing, negotiations for this accommodation are underway, so we will keep our clients informed of developments when they are finalised.

Meanwhile, it is "sort of" business as usual at Lindsay Street until further notice.

STAFF NAMES AND POSITIONS

Greg Coleman Principal Archivist

Diane Foster Archivist (Records Policy)

Linda Bell Archivist (Records Services)

Francis Good Archivist (Oral Records)

Abimbola (Abi) Adeyoyibi Archivist (Information Services)

Maureen Wilkins Administration Officer

Pauline Schindler Transcriber (Oral Records)

Neville Horrocks Archives Assistant (Records Services)

Chris Spicer Storeman/Courier (Records Services)

NT ARCHIVES SERVICE

An agency of the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory.

Postal Address: GPO Box 874,
DARWIN N.T. 0801

Telephone: (089) 99-5961

Facsimile: (089) 41-1458

Northern Territory Archives Service is Moving Again !!

From Monday 27 March 1995,
Northern Territory Archives Service will be located at:

5th Floor
Capricornia House
21 Lindsay Street
Darwin
(See location map on reverse)



The Public Search Room will not be closed for this relocation, however it would be appreciated if researchers could postpone their research until Tuesday 28th March if possible.

The Government Lending Service will not close during the move.

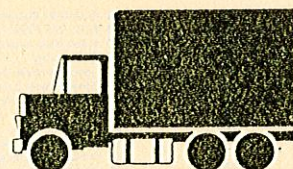
Our phone number, fax number and mailing address will remain the same:

Ph: (089) 99 5961
Fax: (089) 41 1458

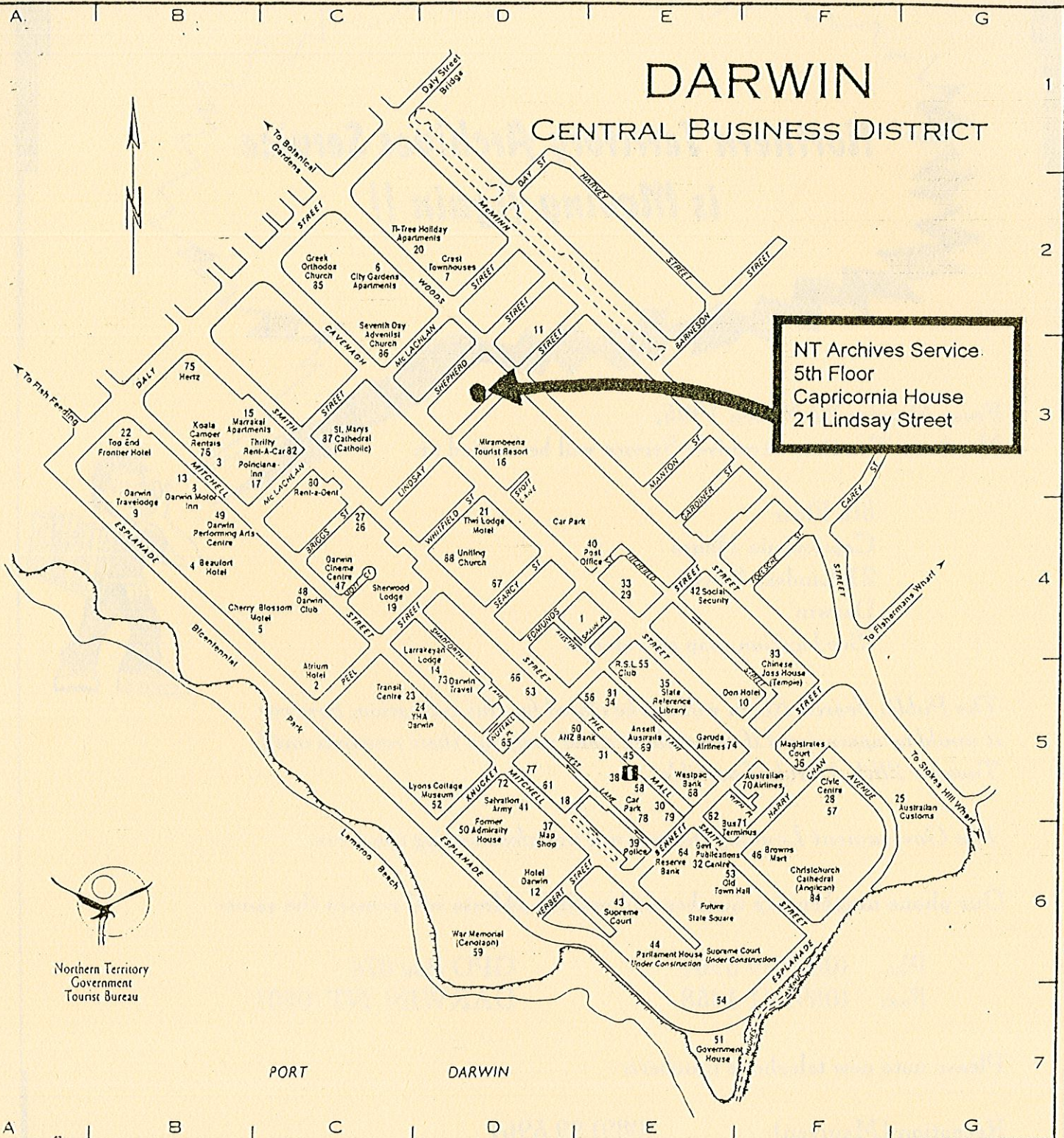
GPO Box 874
DARWIN NT 0801

Please note new telephone numbers:

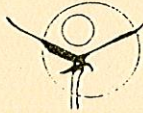
Reception (Maureen)	(089) 99 5961
Lending (Chris)	(089) 99 3588
Information Services (Abi)	(089) 99 3586



Linda Bell
Acting Principal Archivist



NT Archives Service
5th Floor
Capricornia House
21 Lindsay Street



Northern Territory
Government
Tourist Bureau

ACCOMMODATION		GENERAL INFORMATION		ATTRACTIONS/ENTERTAINMENT		TRANSPORT	
1 Air Raid City Lodge	D4	25 Australian Customs	G5	48 Browns Mart	F6	69 Ansett Australia	E5
2 Atrium Hotel	C5	26 Aust. Nat. Parks & Wildlife Service	C4	47 Darwin Cinema Centre	C4	70 Australian Airlines	F5
3 Backpackers International	B3	27 Automobile Association of the NT	C4	48 Darwin Club	C4	23 Bus Australia (Transit Centre)	C5
4 Beaufort Hotel	B4	28 Civic Centre	F5	49 Darwin Performing Arts Centre	B4	71 Bus Taxis - Public Transport	F6
5 Cherry Blossom Motel	C4	29 Commonwealth Employment Service	E4	50 Former Admiralty House	C6	72 Darwin Rent a Car	C5
6 City Gardens Apartments	C2	30 Conservation Commission	E5	51 Government House	E7	73 Darwin Travel	C5
7 Crest Townhouses	D2	31 Located in NT Tourist Bureau		52 Lyons College Museum - B.A.T. Co. Reg. Os	E7	74 Garuda Airlines	E5
8 Darwin Motor Inn	B3	32 Duty Free Shop - Downtown	E5	53 Old Town Hall	E6	23 Grayhound (Transit Centre)	C5
9 Darwin Travelodge	B4	33 Duty Free Shop - Stairs	E5	54 Overland Telegraph Memorial	E7	75 Hertz	B3
10 Don Hotel	E5	34 Government Publications	E5	55 R.S.L. Club	E5	76 Koala Camper Rentals	B3
11 Frogs Hollow Backpackers	D2	35 Immigration, Department of	E4	56 Stuart Memorial (The Mall)	E5	23 Landmark Tours (Transit Centre)	C5
12 Hotel Darwin	D6	36 Library, Darwin - Cariboom Bldg	E5	57 The Tree of Knowledge	F5	77 Malaysian Airlines	C5
13 International Network Hostel	B3	37 Library, State Reference	E5	58 The Victoria Hotel	E5	78 Marriott Airlines	E5
14 Larrakeyah Lodge	C5	38 Magistrates Court	F5	59 War Memorial (Cenotaph)	C6	23 Pioneer Express (Transit Centre)	C5
15 Marrakai Apartments	B3	39 Map Shop - Moonta House	C6			79 Qantas Travel Centre	E5
16 Miramoonie Tourist Resort	C3	39 NT Govt. Tourist Bureau (The Mall)	E5			80 Rent-a-Car	C3
17 Polindaba Inn	B3	39 Police - City Centre	E5			59 Royal Brunei Airlines - agent Ansett	E5
18 Sheraton Darwin Hotel	C5	40 Post Office - Darwin GPO	E4			81 Singapore Airlines	E5
19 Sherwood Lodge	C4	41 Salvation Army (Red Shield Hostel)	C5			82 Thrifty Rent-A-Car	C3
20 Tl-Free Holiday Apartments	C2	42 Social Security, Department of	E4				
21 Tl-Free Lodge Motel	C4	43 Supreme Court	E5				
22 Top End Frontier Hotel	B3	44 Parliament House (Under Construction)	E5				
23 Transit Centre	C5	45 The Mall	E5				
24 YHA Darwin	C5						

BANKS etc.	
50 ANZ Bank	D5
51 Aust. Central Credit Union	D5
52 Commonwealth Bank	E5
53 National Australia Bank	D5
54 Reserve Bank	E5
55 State Bank of South Australia	D5
56 Territory Mutual Building Society	D5
57 The Credit Society (NT)	D4
58 Westpac Bank	E5

CHURCHES	
33 Chinese Joss House (Temple)	F4
34 Christchurch Cathedral (Anglican)	F5
35 Greek Orthodox	C2
36 Seventh Day Adventist	C3
37 St. Marys Cathedral (Catholic)	C3
38 Uniting	C4