



Statement of support for those experiencing floods and fire in Australia



The Australian Society of Archivists Inc. (ASA) and Records and Information Management Professionals Australasia (RIM Professionals Australasia) express their condolences, and offer their support, to all who are affected by the recent floods on the East Coast of Australia and near Carnarvon in Western Australia, and by the fires in Western Australia.

Beyond the tragic and devastating losses of lives, property, and livelihoods lies the lengthy process of re-construction and re-establishment of businesses and day-to-day life. The recent disasters reinforce the importance of including vital business and personal records, and memorabilia, in all preparations for disasters and potential evacuations. In the aftermath of any disaster, time is critical. Swift action and care is required when salvaging damaged records.

Records document and represent the precious memories and identities of individuals and communities. Records are the life blood of organisations large and small, providing information, evidence, and enabling business continuity. "It's difficult to start again without any documents that prove who you are and what belongs to you," said Kate Walker, CEO of RIM Professionals Australasia. Ms Walker explained that "Australia frequently experiences natural disasters that produce significant damage and loss. Whilst there are many resources available to assist organisations in continuing their businesses, there is little assistance for individuals and families. To address this need, RIM Professionals Australasia has prepared the *Personal Continuity Plan*. The plan is a checklist of the vital records needed for re-establishing and continuing life in the aftermath of disasters, such as the bushfires and flooding currently wreaking havoc for so many in Australia." The *Personal Continuity Plan* and other useful resources are available at <http://www.rimpa.com.au>.

Jackie Bettington, Vice President of the Australian Society of Archivists, urged that "Where possible, it is definitely worth the effort to be prepared by identifying your vital records, and having them packed (or backed-up) and ready to take with you in an emergency. Advance preparation saves a lot of time, money, and stress in the recovery and reconstruction phase. Even without advanced or limited preparation it's not too late. Once records have been damaged there are some simple actions which can be taken to salvage records that would otherwise not be recoverable."

The Australian Society of Archivists has recently published a comprehensive manual, *Keeping Archives*, to assist organisations and community groups with managing their archives and records. *Keeping Archives* contains a great deal of information about the preservation, storage, and management of records. It covers all formats of records, including paper, photos, audio-visual records and digital records. Further information is available at <http://www.keepingarchives.com.au>.

Where people find that they have to tackle the task of salvaging records which are seriously damaged by water, fire, mould, and smoke it is vital that they take rapid action. There are many websites which provide expert advice to assist the public, as follows:

Resources for preserving records and archives http://www.aiccm.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=48

<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/collections/preservation/index.html>

<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/explore/conservation-guides>

Resources for preparing and responding to disasters <http://www.blueshielddaustralia.org.au/disastersmanagement.html>

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/topics/disasters-and-records/managing-disasters>

<http://uim.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/DisasterRecovery.pdf>



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Resources for fire damaged records and archives	http://www.blueshielddustralia.org.au/diastersmanagement.htm http://cultural-conservation.unimelb.edu.au/assets/pdf/bushfire-protection.pdf http://www.naa.gov.au/services/family-historians/family-archive/fire.aspx http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/main/bushfire2010.asp
Resources for wet and flood damaged records and archives	All types of records: http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/publications/PreservationServicesAdvices/psa_7.pdf http://archivesoutside.records.nsw.gov.au/conservation-tip-no-6-dealing-with-wet-records/ http://www.blueshielddustralia.org.au/diastersmanagement.htm http://www.naa.gov.au/services/family-historians/family-archive/flood.aspx http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/collections/preservation/dealing_with_mould.html Audio-visual records: http://www.nfsa.gov.au/blog/2011/01/10/recovering-audiovisual-floods/
Resources for Commonwealth Government agencies	http://naa.gov.au
Resources for public offices in NSW	http://www.records.nsw.gov.au
Resources for public authorities in Queensland	http://www.archives.qld.gov.au
Resources for government agencies in Victoria	http://www.prov.vic.gov.au
Resources for government agencies in Western Australia	http://www.sro.wa.gov.au

People affected by floods in Queensland may also contact the Queensland Disaster Information Network (Q-Dis). This network is a group of conservation professionals who share information on disaster preparedness and planning. Further details about Q-Dis are available at <http://manexus.ning.com/group/qdis>. In addition, the Australian Society of Archivists has a website which hosts discussion forums and blogs about the current disasters experienced in Australia. To view and participate in these discussions, and to share images, go to <http://archiveslive.ning.com>.

For more information and advice on disaster preparedness, and the recovery of records and archives, contact Jackie Bettington, Vice President, Australian Society of Archivists on 0432 150 446, or Kate Walker, CEO RIM Professionals Australasia, on 0409 250 795.

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