A Decade of the Public Records Act 2005

by

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Submitted to the School of Information Management,
Victoria University of Wellington
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Information Studies

June 2016

Abstract

Research problem: 2015 marked ten years since the Public Records Act 2005 superseded the Archives Act 1957. Between these pieces of legislation, the New Zealand records management community had actively engaged in attempts to update the act. As the Public Records Act seeks to ensure government accountability through the creation and maintenance of records it is prudent to evaluate the legislation. The research within this paper explores the creation of the Act, and the implementation challenges and successes that have impacted its use by public service departments.

Methodology: A qualitative study was conducted using phenomenological data collection and analysis methods. Information management professionals were interviewed to discover their experience with the Public Records Act. The Records Continuum model has been applied as a lens.

Results: Many challenges influenced the creation, uptake and impact of the Act. The occupational culture of records managers was found to have both impacted the Act, and be influenced by the surrounding events. Communication barriers have affected both the impact of the Act and the relationship between Archives New Zealand and public service records managers. Standards were identified as a positive outcome, while the audit programme was deemed a failure. The Act was found to have achieved important clarification, embedding records creation, and the findings suggest the Records Continuum model is taking root. Professionalisation of records management within New Zealand has also occurred.

Implications: A schism exists between Archives New Zealand and the records management community, represented by a lack of occupational cultural understanding and effective communication. A better understanding of culture is required to enhance recordkeeping maturity to ensure the accountability of government and preservation of New Zealand's national identity.

Keywords: Public Records Act 2005 - Records Management - Occupational Culture - Audits - Public Service Departments

Acknowledgements

Completion of this paper would not have been possible without the encouragement of my supervisor, Gillian Oliver. Thank you for your sage advice and boundless enthusiasm.

To Andrew, for relentlessly believing in me. To my family, for a lifetime of support. To my friends, an endless source of positivity.

I would also like to thank very much those who contributed to my research, for giving so generously their time and thoughts.

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1. Research Problem

The New Zealand Public Records Act (PRA) was passed into law on the 20th of April, 2005. The legislation superseded the Archives Act 1957, which sought "to provide for the custody and preservation of the public archives of New Zealand" (p.44). The PRA aims to ensure Government accountability through the creation and maintenance of records. It also seeks to preserve records with cultural and historical long-term value, reflecting New Zealand's national identity. The Act provides for public access to and confidence in the integrity of public office and local authority records, while maintaining privacy where necessary. The PRA also provides for the Chief Archivist to develop and support government recordkeeping.

Good recordkeeping is an essential component of democratic government. It provides evidence of decision making, supports accountability, and facilitates business and social processes while also upholding legal and ethical rights (Iacovino, 2005, p.255-256). These mechanisms and their management have been brought into question recently in light of the investigation into the Prime Minister's deletion of text messages, which found that advice and support had been inadequate (Little, 2015). Furthermore, Chief Archivist Marilyn Little recently expressed concerns that the level of recordkeeping in public offices was not at an acceptable level, following the completion of the 2014/15 audits (Archives New Zealand, 2015b). These comments precede an upcoming report from Archives New Zealand, where the organisation will reflect on the auditing programme and more thoroughly the current state of recordkeeping in New Zealand.

New Zealand literature currently explores in depth aspects of the PRA and recordkeeping, mostly in the context of public service departments. Less represented are government departments previously not covered by the PRA, for example tertiary education institutions and local authorities. Archives New Zealand have also produced a number of reports regarding records management in New Zealand. The majority of this research contributes quantitative data. A qualitative gap exists, as does the need to consider the PRA as a whole. There is also a gap in the New Zealand literature which brings together an account of the country's records

management history, which has influenced the creation and implementation of the Act.

By using a qualitative approach to describe how the Public Records Act has been embraced over the last ten years, this research will examine the current recordkeeping environment and success of the PRA in the context of its history and how that has shaped the profession's approach and perception. The findings will enable better communication between the community and the regulatory body, empower records managers within their organisations, and provide a basis for improvement in guidance, regulation and practice. The findings will also inform the international records management community as it continues to explore standardisation.

1.1 Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to understand the path of the PRA over the last ten years, from the perspective of those with direct experience. The study seeks to understand what contributed to the Archives Act 1957 being superseded, the processes that took place, and the impact it has had on New Zealand public offices. Building this picture should provide some context to the Chief Archivist's comments about the lack of government records management maturity.

The development of this broad understanding of the New Zealand records management environment will provide grounding for future decision-making regarding the Act's continued application. This knowledge will also contribute to the understanding of New Zealand's wider information environment, and relevant legislation with which the PRA interacts.

1.2 Research Questions

In order to understand the above research objective this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

How did the Public Records Act come to be?
How was the Public Records Act implemented?

What were the challenges and successes of the Public Records Act?

What impact has it had on recordkeeping in New Zealand?

1.3 Delimitations and Assumptions

The time frame associated with the research meant the scope was limited to the evaluation of the PRA only in the context of Public Service Departments, as defined by Archives New Zealand (2015a) (Appendix A). Excluded public offices include tertiary education institutions and state-owned enterprises (SOE). Despite this the findings of the research should be relevant to all public offices, and the wider records and information management communities of New Zealand.

The scope and timeframe also limited the size of the sample population, and the flexibility to accommodate participants. Interviews were limited to one per participant, with a maximum running time estimated to be 60 minutes. This is reasonable as the paper aims to present an overview of the recent history of public records management within New Zealand.

1.4 Terminology

Information Management

"A professional field concerned with optimising the uses of information, using both social and technical approaches" (Archives New Zealand, n.d.).

Public Service Department

The Public Service is "[s]ometimes described as the first, or inner, tier of the 'three tier State', the other two tiers being Crown entities and State-owned enterprises" (State Services Sector, n.d.).

Public Record

"A record created or received by a public office in the conduct of its affairs" (Archives New Zealand, n.d.).

Records Management

i) "field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records" (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2001, p. 3);

ii) "the management of records...to meet the needs of private and public sector organizations and the wider society as well as the research community" (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003, p.1).

2. Literature Review

New Zealand has a long history with knowledge and record making and sharing, which includes mātauranga Māori (Mercier, Stevens & Toia, 2012) and whakapapa (Mercier, et al., p.107; Roberts, 2012), and British colonial written records (Smith, 1978, p.7-8). The PRA marks a departure from the British and European influences, turning instead to a holistic system more responsive to the government's ambitious goal of "digital by default" in 2017 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014, p.10). However progress has been slow, and it is worth examining the development of modern records management to better situate the current New Zealand context.

2.1 A Brief History of Modern Records Management

In the early 20th Century records management concepts were considered a part of archival examination. Relevant concepts and processes were adopted by those working in the field and slowly expanded upon, until records management became a profession in its own right.

One of these archivists was Margaret Cross Norton, who contributed to the establishment of the Illinois Archives in the 1920s, working to ensure the protection of government records of future significance. Norton also promoted the records office as facilitating the efficiency of public offices and improving access to records when required (Lawrimore, 2009, p.187), and was heavily involved in defining records (p.195). As with many archivists at the time Cross was heavily influenced by Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archival Administration* which discussed record integrity and

authenticity. This would influence the concept of records as evidence of transactions (Brown, 2014, p.xv).

Jenkinson is often contrasted with T.R. Schellenberg, another contributor to the records management field, who sought to distinguish a record from an archive (Cox, 2000, p.100; Williams, 2014, p.13). In his view, a record was the product of an organisation "generated as evidence of its activities or for informational purposes", while archives were those selected or recognised as having longer-term value (Williams, p.13).

2.2 Modern Records Management in New Zealand

Much of the writing relevant to New Zealand's development of records management can be found in *Archifacts*, a journal produced by the Archives and Records Management Association of New Zealand (ARANZ). Previous to the output of ARANZ much of the writing relevant to New Zealand and be found in a report written in 1913. Another would not be written until 1978, by Dr. Wilfred I. Smith. Given the nature of the proposed research and its methods, and in the absence of governmental reports, the often opinionated writings of *Archifacts* are important in showing the development of theory, practice, and professional observations.

One of these observations describes the slow growing recognition of archival importance in New Zealand (Hall, 1974). While parallels can be drawn between the early careers of Hall and Norton, the line is drawn at Jenkinson who she describes as writing "with an excessive emphasis on medieval records" (p.2). With a lack of educational opportunities in New Zealand (a problem that would persist into the early 21st Century). Hall undertook a year of study in the United States, discovering Schellenberg and records management.

The Hope Gibbons Building fire of 1952 is often credited with paving the way for the introduction of the Archives Act 1957 (Hall, p.2; Smith 1978, p.8). The fire destroyed the majority of early records of the Lands and Survey Department, the Labour Department, the Ministry of Works and the Marine Department. This event highlighted the importance of the work of Hall and her colleague Michael Standish.

In 1978 Dr. Wilfred Smith reported on the state of archives and recordkeeping in New Zealand. Visiting from Canada by invitation of ARANZ, Smith observed the climate in New Zealand to be ripe for change, noting a recent proposal to revise the Archives Act, an "accelerated increase in volume" of government records, and government recognition of the need to utilise its available resources (p.6).

In 1986 the December issue of *Archifacts* was dedicated to the concerns of records management in reaction to the *Acton Report*, published by the State Services Commission in 1986. Little progress had been made since the *Smith Report*, with implementations only occurring within local authorities and church archives (Collier, 1986, p.14). Findings included a lack of training and utilisation of skills in the records management profession, and identified areas for significant cost saving which included retention and disposal schedules (Marr, 1986, p.11).

This focus on economic savings could be interpreted as creating a more efficient government records management programme to improve the utilisation of information, however history shows improving the state of public records management would remain a low priority. The December issue of *Archifacts* is interesting as it lacks many of the concepts at the root of records management (integrity, making government accountable, or preserving New Zealand's history). The tone of the writers suggests building frustration at the decade-long wait for public archives and records legislation.

2.3 Government Information

From the 1970s government attitudes towards information began to shift and grow. This new interest and understanding was reflected in the bloom of academic literature addressing government information issues.

2.3.1 Shifting Attitudes Amidst Extreme Reform

From the late 1970s the concept of open and accessible government information began to emerge. A significant catalyst for change was a collection of reports from the Committee on Official Information which insisted legislation reflect "current

attitudes and practices" (Danks Committee, 1978, as cited by Richards & Donnelly, 1996, p.244). Numerous pieces of legislation were introduced as a result, including the Official Information Act (OIA) and Privacy Act 1993.

The OIA repealed the Official Secrets Act 1951, which had embodied an access to information by exception, rather than rule, mentality. The OIA's objectives of government accountability and public participation in decision making are present in the PRA, demonstrating its wide influence. Richards & Donnelly note that unlike other countries with similar legislation, New Zealand's was broad, specifying 'information' rather than 'document' (p.247), a similar approach adopted in the PRA.

Public sector restructures, caused by the snap election of 1984, stifled hope for change amongst records managers, and has been described by many as extreme reform (Meehan, 1996; Oliver & Konsa, 2012; Richards & Donnelly). Meehan points to government rhetoric at the time using open government and recordkeeping concepts to support the changes (p.232). Meehan uses the Department of Survey and Land Information's attempts to maximise its economic value as a SOE, while also democratising information for the wider public through its vast number of databases, as an example of the shifting and conflicting priorities of government at the time (p.239). These new information management concepts were still being tested and experimented with.

Information management in government remained on the periphery, despite Meehan's optimism. Writing retrospectively, Oliver & Konsa describe the attitude towards records as one of prevailing ambivalence, which the introduction of the OIA did little to stem (p.91). They particularly attribute popular Western management theory to undermining records management as it valued chaos over order and organisational systems (p.92-93). The *Acton Report*, despite being government initiated, suffered a similar fate to the *Smith Report*.

2.3.2 Knowledge Management - A Stepping Stone

Growing acceptance of information as a strategic resource can perhaps be seen in the uptake of knowledge management (KM) in the 1990s. It allowed corporate knowledge to be leveraged for fiscal gains, improve workflow, and enhance customer

experiences (Jeffcoat, 2001, p.1). While KM was seen as a "harnessing of intellectual capital" (Carter, 2000, p.2), records managers were "'the janitors of the information age'" (Coulson, 1993, as cited by Carter, p.29).

It is this rise in popularity of KM, it can be argued, that paved a records management 'come-back' as organisations began to consider the utilisation of their information. Records management's point of difference from KM was its role as a risk management tool (Carter, p.36) which played into the fiscal concerns of both public and private organisations.

Jeffcoat studied five New Zealand government organisations and found that those implementing knowledge management systems were also often implementing records management and document management systems (p.36). Rather than demonstrating an understanding of the complexity of information needs, the implementation of various systems better reflects organisations exploring these new concepts. While Jeffcoat's research shows a strong emphasis on strategic needs and financial gain being carried through into the 21st century, it also demonstrates another information management shift as organisations began to share their information both internally (within and between departments) and externally to the wider public (p.39, 42).

2.4 The Public Records Act

The large amount of information providing analysis relating to the PRA and the journey it has had is represented by reports produced by Archives New Zealand, and the growing research output of postgraduate students.

2.4.1 The Lead Up

Archives New Zealand finally became a government department in 2000 (since its inception in 1957 it had been known as National Archives). The following year the organisation jointly released (with a Statutory Regulatory Group) a draft discussion paper detailing issues related to a proposed Public Records Bill. This would replace the Archives Act, which those in the profession had been attempting to amend (at the least) since the 1970s.

The paper included three key objectives which reflected the information culture shift experienced by government and its public offices, which remain relevant today. The objectives were "accountability and public confidence...good management, including cost efficiency…[and] collective memory and historical heritage" (2001, p.4).

Shifting attitudes toward information access, changes in business practices and the introduction of digital technology necessitated new legislation, as did the need to account for legislation introduced since 1957. The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 particularly presented new concepts to consider, such as the capture and protection of cultural knowledge and intellectual property (p.6).

Perhaps the most promising discussion point was the required clarification of Archives New Zealand's role in managing public records. On top of the organisation's ability to advise public offices, the bill sought to ensure it could issue and enforce records management standards (p.15).

ARANZ, care of their president Alison Fraser, did not react fondly, detailing concerns and responses to posed questions in their submission to Archives New Zealand (2001). Fraser felt the bill lacked firm proposals, and had concerns regarding its limited circulation to interested parties and, ironically, lack of transparency surrounding the process. This response shows the schism that surfaced in the 1980s between Archives New Zealand and ARANZ had not resided, as does the following comment regarding Archives New Zealand's relationship with the wider archival and records community: "Acceptance, from and by the profession, stakeholders and practitioners is a[sic] accolade to be won, not given through legislation" (p.5).

This submission was referred to during the Bill's first reading, with National MP Lindsay Tisch also expressing concern about the process (Hobbs, 2004, p.15775). While overall it received support, concern and interest was expressed toward the inclusion of a clause regarding the Treaty of Waitangi (Hobbs, 2004).

2.4.2 Implementation

Since the changes to Archives New Zealand's departmental status in 2000 the organisation has been actively supporting public offices. This includes the release of official reports, which had previously been absent from the literature. The reports should demonstrate the progress made since the PRA's introduction; instead they show expectations and anticipation, followed by disappointment.

Archives New Zealand sought to build up a picture of the public records management climate in order to inform the development of the standards, guidelines and training required to embed sound practices in the lead up to the first audits in 2010. Key themes identified in the 2006 report were concern for how public offices were dealing with the rise of digital recordkeeping (p.77) and the importance of "[i]mproving the underlying human capability" through effective training and education (p.81).

These concerns were felt across government at the time, expanding the reach to information management in general, especially in relation to the rise of digital technologies. Examining the OIA in 2007 Nicola White found that new technologies posed one of the greatest challenges to administering the Act, especially when compared to the expectations of the 1978 Danks Committee (p.213-4). This comment indicates the speed of which information culture was changing and eroding the basis of legislation, and harkens back to the previous attempts at amending the Archives Act for similar reasons, illustrating a sustained lack of concern for records management.

Speaking specifically of records management in government, White explains it controls what information is kept, which in turn facilitates the ease at which OIA requests can be found and provided. Her study found a persistent lack of appropriate staff and information management systems (p.121). The management of emails was of particular concern, and interestingly concern about text messages was also raised, eight years prior to the investigation into the Prime Minister's actions (p.122-126).

The yearly audit programme, facilitated by Archives New Zealand in five year cycles, is one of the measures at hand to assess such issues, hold government accountable and determine public office ability to comply with the PRA. The report for 2012/13

found only one third of public offices capable of mature recordkeeping (2014b, p.4), yet emphasised the work being undertaken in the sector to embed good records management practices (p.16).

The 2014/15 audit (the final for the first cycle) showed continued concern toward the level of records Management maturity in public offices, with only half of those audited meeting a managed approach level (Archives New Zealand, 2015c, p.1). Disposal and transfer had the lowest maturity for every audit, despite continually being recognised since the 1950s as both a crucial component of records management and an area in need of improvement. Overall the 2014/15 report states a lack of "sustained improvement over the five years of the audit programme" (p.22). The report also comments on Archives New Zealand's regulatory role, noting in order to better fulfil this role a broader understanding of records management in government is required (p.6).

2.4.3 Standards

One aspect of the PRA which has had academic attention are standards. A thorough review of records management standards literature was conducted in 2011 by Currie, who found internationally most researchers were investigating implementation over utilisation, and New Zealand had an evident lack of literature (p.5). Currie found that standards were used within government organisations as guidance, but not perceived as valuable by records managers, which contradicted international commentary (p.26).

Snow added to the New Zealand literature by examining the compliance of government departments with the *Electronic Recordkeeping Metadata Standard* (2013). It was found that knowledge of the standard was sound; however participants' drive to capture record metadata was for business purposes, therefore they were found to "pragmatically" comply (p.55). Snow also found that a single department could have "simultaneous states of compliance and non-compliance" in line with the philosophy of the records continuum (p.55). Research has also shown organisational culture to have an impact on the ability of government organisations to comply with aspects of the PRA (Hitchcock, 2014), and on a macro-international scale the creation and development of international standard *ISO 15489:2001*

Information and Documentation - Records Management was particularly challenged by occupational cultures - the differing values put on information by records managers and archivists (Oliver, 2014).

2.5 Holding Government to Account

The PRA's stated purpose is to enable the Government's accountability through creation and maintenance of records. It aims also to enable public confidence in the integrity of records.

2.5.1 Integrity and Authenticity

Record integrity is discussed by Duranti as being dependent on both reliability and authenticity, contributing to "the genuineness of a record" (2002, p.25). The ability to determine accountability for a record, usually through rules and procedures associated with creation and maintenance, supports its reliability (p.27). This reliability is important in a number of contexts, such as justifying decisions and providing evidence for past actions (Reed, 2005b, p.107).

Duranti relates authenticity to the actions and controls placed on existing records, in order to prove its integrity has remained the same (p.27-8). Archives New Zealand's definition of authenticity is taken from ISO 15489, where a record can be proven "[t]o be what it purports to be, to have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it, and to have been created or sent at the time purported" (n.d.).

2.5.2 Accountability

Good records, therefore, provide a sound basis for the accountability of government to the public. However, for this accountability to be upheld it requires people in society to look at and critique government processes and decisions, and utilise records management as a tool (Hurley, 2005, p.224). Often cited users of legislation that enable public access to government records, such as the OIA or freedom of information acts, are journalists (Aminu, Kagu, Malgwi, & Danjuma, 2011; Shepherd, Stevenson, & Flinn, 2011).

This is particularly important in countries where corruption in government is embedded, and freedom of press is one of few means to expose such activities. An example of this is the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2011 (FOIA) in Nigeria. In recognising the critical role records management played in facilitating the FOIA, Aminu et al. surveyed public and private sector administrators and found the majority of respondents had not seen improvements in records management or access to information, but believed it would improve attitudes towards recordkeeping (p.399-400).

Unfortunately, this was not the case, and in subsequent years the FOIA has not saturated government, despite its high importance to Nigerian human rights (CJN, NJI boss urge judges to familiarise with FOI, 2014). Despite good intentions, an underlying lack of government support for implementation and provision of appropriate systems left the act ineffective, and a corrupt government unaccountable to its actions (Okonji, 2015).

2.5.3 Breaches of Public Confidence

Archives New Zealand recently reviewed the status of text messages as public records, responding to claims Prime Minister John Key had deleted his and was thus in breach of the PRA. The report found Key's routine deletion of texts likely to be PRA compliant, being largely transitory in nature and deleted for security purposes (Little, p.11). Little found that Archives New Zealand's records management advice and support was inadequate, failing to advise on the complexities of mobile environments (p.13). The findings do not negate the effect such accusations have on public opinion regarding the actions of government, and the reliability of the PRA and advice from Archives New Zealand. The Act enables public confidence in records, which requires confidence in both the regulatory body and those directed to create and maintain records, regardless of format.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The Records Continuum Model has been used as a lens for the research as it is reflective of all aspects of the PRA. The Upward model most commonly used demonstrates a movement away from linear actions favoured by lifecycle models.

Upward's model is non-linear, with no prescribed start or end point, and the movement of records is not restricted to a single direction (Reed, 2005a, p.22). The model consists of four dimensions: create, capture, organise, pluralise; and four axes: transactionality, evidentiality, recordkeeping, identity.

The Continuum also fits with the phenomenological data collection and analysis methods employed, as it allows for various interpretations and meanings to be examined in relation to the implementation of the PRA (p.23).

Broadly the continuum relates to the PRA and Mandatory Standard as it ensures the creation of records by public offices, which are assigned appropriate metadata and placed into records systems. Creating context then allows for records to be differentiated from information, shared within and between organisations for strategic means and societal benefit. These records also contribute to corporate memory, and through disposal decisions build New Zealand's national identity, whilst protecting the privacy of individuals.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This research was conducted using qualitative methods to gather data that would enable the examination and description of processes relating to the PRA from the perspective of information management professionals.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population for the research consisted of information management professionals with extensive and influential experience with the PRA and similar legislation. The decision to use the term 'Information Management' professional reflects the diversity within this line of work, where professionals may be called Records Managers, Information Managers or Knowledge Managers, to name a few.

An initial sample of eight information management professionals, chosen for the breadth of their experiences with the PRA and the recordkeeping environment in New Zealand, were contacted by email (Appendix B). They were encouraged to

suggest colleagues whom they felt met the research criteria. Through this snowball sampling an additional two professionals were offered the chance to participate.

The final sample consisted of five professionals. They were each provided by email an interview guide, participant information sheet, and participant consent form (Appendix C).

3.2 Data Collection

A qualitative data collection approach was chosen as Leedy & Ormrod describe its usefulness in evaluating the effectiveness of policies or practices, which aligns with the objective of the research (2013, p.140). Specifically, phenomenological research was selected as it would facilitate an understanding of how the PRA has been perceived and experienced (Bevan, 2014, p.136; Leedy & Ormrod, p.145).

Each interviewee participated in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes each. Three interviews were conducted in person, and two were conducted by video call using Skype software. The decision to utilise the video function for Skype interviews was made to better establish a rapport, observe body language, and ensure consistency between interviews. All participants consented to the audio recording of the interviews.

The interview questions were semi-structured and reflected the research questions. The interviews had a conversational tone to encourage the rapport development between the interviewer and participant, based on mutual interest in the PRA (Boeije, 2010, p.62; Leedy & Ormrod, p.190; O'Leary, p.217). The phenomenological nature of the research meant participants did most of the talking, with the researcher using body language and verbal prompts, such as "tell me more about that", to encourage reflective discussion.

Part of this loose structure included three phases, as described by Bevan. The first established the context between the participant and their experience of the phenomenon. For example, participants were asked to describe their experience of the PRA creation and application.

The second phase elicited various ways in which a participant understood or experienced the phenomenon through descriptive and structural questions. Participants often used emotive language to describe particular experiences, and so were prompted to expand on processes surrounding the experience. This phase was particularly important for gathering information for data analysis (p.140-141).

The third phase sought to clarify the phenomenon using imaginative variation. Bevan notes this practice is not commonly undertaken during phenomenological interviews. It was found to only be implemented on occasion. It is a useful method to conclude particular topics by discovering varying actions and outcomes envisioned by participants, depending on their differing experiences (p.141-142). For example, one participant was asked to imagine alternative means of communication during the PRA's creation, and how this might alter outcomes.

The list of interview questions was sent ahead of time as this would "manage the process of questioning" (Bevan, p.138), by allowing participants to fully consider their participation and make preparations.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Approval was granted by the School of Information Management's Human Ethics Committee in April of 2016.

As this is a confidential study all information gathered, including the details of participants, is password protected and accessible only by the researcher and supervisor. While codes have been given to participants, additional precautions have been taken to protect their identities, which includes the decision not to reveal specific data relating to their professional experiences. This is due to both the small sample size and the well-connected records management community within New Zealand.

Participants have been assured that the data will be destroyed two years after the project's completion.

3.4 Limitations

One limitation of the research is time constraint. This limitation is reflected in the small population contacted, as well as the breadth of interviewing completed. While the interview lengths were reasonable for the subject matter, it is suggested that interviews last up to two hours (Leedy & Ormrod, p.145).

The time constraints contributed to the limited extent with which phase two and three of Bevan's interview structure could be utilised.

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data followed six broad steps, as explained by O'Leary (p.299-324), the first of which was to establish the researcher's own biases and preconceived notions. These assumptions are reflected in the themes explored in the literature review, and influenced the development of interview questions. Bevan refers to this self-reflection as "bracketing", and was applied by the researcher to both data gathering and analysis (p.138-9).

The raw data produced from each interview (recordings and handwritten notes) were transcribed and assessed immediately upon their conclusion. The researcher noted general observations while memory of the interview was current. Copies of the transcripts were emailed to participants.

The next involved identifying words and concepts brought up by the interviewees which were organised into categories. This step allowed for inductive reasoning to occur, drawing conclusions about the phenomenon.

Comparison of the words and concepts used by each participant to recall their experiences of the PRA was undertaken in order to establish "global themes" connecting the various categories (p.309). This step determined whether or not participants had shared memories and experiences and informed the discussion of results. This step also allowed for the discovery of differences in opinion within similar concepts and themes.

The reading of transcripts and noting of themes and concepts was repeated a number of times, in conjunction with reflection upon the themes from the literature. This examination of and reflection on themes enabled the development of conclusions regarding the phenomenon.

4. Findings

The findings below are organised into the overarching global themes discovered through data analysis. Categories and concepts within those are discussed under headings where appropriate.

The global themes consist of:

- Pre-Act
- Implementation Challenges
- Success and Failure
- Impact on Records Management
- Reflections

Given the confidential nature of the study, and prominence of participants in their fields, care has been taken not to reveal any identifying information. Generic codes have been assigned to each transcription, which will be used to differentiate participant quotes (IM1-IM5). The regulatory body, Archives New Zealand, was previously known as National Archives (1957-2000). It will be called by its most recent name.

4.1 Pre-Act

The following section explores concepts relevant to the development of the PRA as experienced by the participants. These include perceptions of the Archives Act 1957, a wider understanding of the information environment during the 1980s and 1990s, and the role played by the New Zealand government as the bill became legislation.

Archives Act 1957

Throughout the interviews participants often made reference to the Archives Act 1957. The comments showed that various stakeholders within both the records management and archival communities knew the Act needed replacing and that many stakeholders:

> "had been involved at various stages to try and push for new legislation and that had been really going on for a long, long time. I would say since the '80s but they would argue probably almost from the '60s." [(IM3)]

Reasons for the push for new legislation included a need to clarify assumptions within the Act, the ability to emphasise that electronic records were indeed public records, and a need for legislation that senior management of departments would take seriously. There was also a need to align the legislation with others passed into law, such as the OIA and the Privacy Act 1993, and to place records management requirements on those previously not covered, such as tertiary education institutions and SOE's.

The PRA was also described as being "custodial...which meant it was really about preserving important stuff...but there were no teeth to get the important stuff." [(IM4)]. (Interestingly most of the interviewees used the 'lack of teeth phrase' to indicate Archives New Zealand's lacking mandate.) The participant explained that the governing body was not able to influence the front-end design of records management systems or enforce disposal. As a result of this Archives New Zealand staff "were literally running at times to get things out of skips." [(IM2)]

1980s and 1990s Environment

The interviewees also described their experiences in the information industry during the 1980s and 1990s. This discussion facilitated the rapport between researcher and participant. Insight was gained regarding the genus of their beliefs and value systems, and was also crucial in building and understanding of the shifting zeitgeist that would eventually culminate in the Public Records Act 2005.

The records management profession was described as being very clerical and paper-based. There was a trend in government departments of putting underperforming staff in the records department, taking a "they can't do any harm there" [(IM1)] attitude.

Two interviewees commented on the changing information landscape of the 1990s, where roles were being redefined, causing some professionals to take a step back and re-establish a grounding in records theory. One highlighted the uptake in New Zealand of knowledge management, where organisations (public and private alike) "were adopting this term... but all they were seeing...was a sexy new way of trying to get money for information and records management things." [(IM2)]

Another interviewee made contrasting comments about the various attempts to sell records and archives, whether it be to pass new legislation or encourage senior management to take it seriously: "it's not the sexiest thing alive." [(IM3)] The interviewee's example was attempting to explain metadata to various stakeholders during the 1990s, resulting in many glazed eyes.

Despite this, two interviewees talked about early attempts Archives New Zealand had made to influence records management, despite their lack of mandate. An example of this mentioned was the organisation's establishment of a short-lived records training programme, under the influence of Ray Grover (Chief Archivist 1982-1991), at least to influence the state and type of records they were receiving.

Interviewees also mentioned the "rocky" [(IM3)] relationship between Archives New Zealand and Internal Affairs (at the time), which was similarly commented on as being problematic when Archives New Zealand was merged back into the Department of Internal Affairs in 2011.

Government Influence

Two participants noted that legislation change such as this typically requires political support. Interviewees generally agreed that a main contributing factor in getting the bill drafted and passed was the push from the fifth Labour Government, elected in 1999. They were enthusiastic "about the significance of archives as part of...the

infrastructure of government." [IM5] Two interviewees particularly attributed this push and support to Michael Cullen (Deputy Prime Minister 2002-2008) who was described as "a very personal champion for the change" [IM5] which created the "perfect circumstance...to actually move things forward" [IM3] after decades of defeat.

Passage into Law

When recounting the passage of the bill into law, many of the interviewees commented on the speed of which it happened: "Urban legend is that Archives New Zealand actually had no idea that the Act was getting passed when it got passed." [IM2]

Two also commented on the process of drafting and consultation as being heavily influenced by government Ministers, which could explain the perceived notion that the organisation was not quite prepared: "The government of the day were very keen to see...the legislation in place...probably over-optimistic about how quick and easy it would be to deliver." [IM5] The same interviewee reflected on possible consequences of this, noting they "didn't necessarily have some of those more challenging policy conversations...in terms of the different paradigms" [IM5] and thought it possible this had an effect on the level of communication Archives New Zealand believed was required.

4.2 Implementation Challenges

A number of themes and concepts were identified relating to the challenges which shaped participants' experiences with the PRA. One of the themes – communication – has been further divided into the more specific concepts of the PRA's clarifying mandate and the challenge of compliance.

Resourcing

Resourcing was discussed as an overarching challenge. Records managers in public service departments generally experienced underfunded programmes. It was also expressed by a participant that Archives New Zealand, prior to the interest of the fifth Labour Government, was underfunded and felt that it was not taken seriously. Another noted that this lack of funding persisted post the PRAs implementation,

which had a big impact of the level of influence Archives New Zealand has been able to action. As a consequence, Archives New Zealand "swoop in and touch things every now and then and leave" [IM2] despite, the participant believes, the organisation's desire to have a greater influence.

On a national level, one interviewee reflected that prior to the Act "New Zealand was skint" [IM4] and described the government as doing things "on the thought of the smell of an oily rag." [IM4] They believed this resourcing squeeze strongly contributed to an incredibly innovative environment to deal with the requirements of the PRA, where "...a lot of the technology deployment was very creative." [IM4]

Regulatory Role

A common theme among the interviewees was the tension between Archives New Zealand's new role as a regulator and its other role as facilitator, believing this impacted how many have experienced the PRA. Two in particular felt that the organisation has struggled to come to terms with this dual role, but were sympathetic: "you have to look at it and think Archives New Zealand are doing a really good job given that they have only been in that role for this period of time 'cause in the scheme of things it's not very long at all." [IM2]

Comments were also made about the level to which this role has been utilised, which overall seemed to be little. It was felt that the organisation turned inwards once the Act was passed and "stood too far back" [IM2] in its interactions with agencies.

Explanations for why this may have been the case included a lack of resources and practical knowledge around records management, an inability to give solid advice regarding digital records (particularly in regards to disposal), and the many changes experienced by the organisation itself since 2000. One interviewee noted that even when it was a stand-alone department its powers were limited, suggesting that the "Chief Archivist needs to become an office of parliament." [IM3]

Alternative to the view that the challenges were based in a lack of bravery or fundamental power, is that the institution was being careful to figure out how best to use its role as a regulator, particularly in relation to standard setting:

> "I think Chief Archivists have been very mindful that it's the sort of power that, if you abuse it they'll take it away...so I think they have deliberately been relatively cautious in how they play the standards card and as a result it's probably been much more effective than it would have been if people had tried to use it for aggressive change in practice...it's really led to the standards mechanism being seen as a vehicle for leadership and guidance rather than...enforcement..." (IM5)

High Level or Prescriptive

Archives New Zealand have similarly faced the challenging task of balancing the application of standards between high level and prescriptive styles, against expectations of records managers. While criticism was made of the high level of the standards, most accepted that that was how standards were meant to be. One interviewee felt that standards needed to be principles-based because with prescription there are "too many differentials...There's a fine art around where the level of prescription is and I know that that's being explored at the moment in Archives New Zealand, they're trying to recalibrate the regulation." (IM4)

Communication

Direct comments from participants and conflicting understanding among them suggest that communication was one of the biggest challenges during the creation and implementation of the PRA. Criticism included a perceived lack of consultation with various stakeholders while drafting. The lack of clear communication is best demonstrated by participant's discussions of the PRA's role as clarification and the issue of compliance.

Public Records Act as Clarification

Four of the interviewees mentioned that the PRA's main purpose was to clarify points that were either unclear or unspecified in the Archives Act 1957; however, this theme materialised in two different contexts.

Commenting on the 1957 Act, one participant said "It was...unclear as to what responsibilities there were for records management and record making, or whether the interests of Archives only started at the time of disposition" [IM5] and upon reflection believes the clarification objective, particularly in reference to the responsibility to create records, was achieved.

Another interviewee felt the same, and spoke about the emphasis on clarification in the context of electronic records. The interviewee compared the paper-based mentality of records management when the processes of creation and organisation into systems were assumed, and how that had not translated into electronic records management: "By the time computers came in...they were sitting on everyone's desks and everything was just being clogged up." [IM3] One of the purposes of the Act, in their opinion, was to make it clear that electronic records also required classification and organisation: "I think that was a revelation to government departments because I don't think they'd really thought about it." [IM3]

The other two interviewees who mentioned the clarification function of the PRA did so either in passing, or as a way to explain why it had not met the expectations of records managers within the first few years: "all the Act did was, in itself...was almost clarify some things?" [IM2] The other highlighted the importance of creating and maintaining records for work contracted out, and praised its inclusion in the PRA. Previous to that, in their experience, it had only been "a couple of very enlightened people" [IM1] who had taken action to retain such records.

Compliance

When analysing the participants' experience with the concept of compliance relating to the PRA, it became clear that a disconnect existed between those who drafted and regulated the Act, and those to whom it applied in public service departments. This situation was explained particularly well by one participant, in relation to the audit programme:

> "there was a little bit of disconnect between the way that the institution saw the audit programme best being used and the hopes of some elements in

the record community... There was a lot of communication...to try and explain to them how that would work, but to some extent it fell on deaf ears..." (IM5)

Records managers were also described by many interviewees as having a strong desire for specific direction to achieve compliance and its enforcement.

Occupational Culture

Communication was not the only reason there were differing expectations for the role compliance would play. The occupational culture of records managers was also a contributing factor, the desire for compliance amongst stakeholder existing previous to the drafting of the Act.

Other judgements and reflections were made by the interviewees relating to the occupational cultural space that New Zealand records managers occupy, often as a means to explain other issues. When recounting the professional pathway of records managers in New Zealand they discussed the practice of Archives New Zealand staff completing postgraduate study in Australia. This was also mentioned in the context of the commonalities between New Zealand and Australian legislations, standards, and auditing processes.

Many of the interviewees also made comments alluding to the practical nature of people working with records. Descriptions included "manual readers...rule keepers" (IM1) and "control freak." (IM2)

Records managers were described as being hopeful that the PRA and its accompanying frameworks would be prescriptive and provide the rules they wanted to follow. Some records managers were described as having a "take the pain away so I don't have to think" (IM4) mentality.

It was similarly experienced that many in the community hoped the PRA would be a tool or weapon to get senior management attention, in order to secure better funding and resourcing for often marginalised units. Some of the comments suggested

records managers had anticipated the Act as being such from the beginning, while others experienced the 'weaponising' as a consequence of feeling let down. As one interviewee explained in relation to disposal: "[Archives New Zealand] tried to push the level of preparation back onto the agencies and the agencies are busy rebelling...the entire interaction with the agency gets really negative." [IM2] In consideration of these factors one interviewee posited "there is an awful lot of folk in the records community who feel like victims...there were a lot of people who were looking for a silver bullet." [IM5]

Comments were also made that described how interviewees believe Archives New Zealand perceived records managers. One interviewee wondered if Archives New Zealand believed records managers who received a negative audit review would take it personally. This was used to explain the lenient attitude Archives New Zealand seem to have taken, which was not what the profession wanted.

Contested Inclusion

One participant noted the first draft of the PRA did not have any provisions for local authorities. Local authority records managers questioned this, and were subsequently included. The participant stated that despite this inclusion "Archives New Zealand does not do enough for Local Government, and it never has." [IM1] This is reiterated by another participant who recognised the local authority provisions within the Act remained old fashioned, and partially attributed this to direction given by Ministers.

On the other side of this was the significant push back from groups previously not covered by the archival legislation. Particularly of note were SOE's and tertiary education institutions. It was felt that a lot of communication and work was put into facilitating their inclusion, however in the end certain groups received provisions under the Act because of "Ministerial intervention," [IM5] as a way to progress the legislation.

4.3 Success and Failure

The words success and failure are very strong, and participants did not easily attribute them to the concepts discussed. This is reflected in the findings below, where the PRA can claim one success, and one failure.

Standards

Responses regarding the Standards were mixed, but overall positive. Interviewees perceived them to be tools that gave records managers concrete rules to follow which "made them feel better... It was really good for the profession." (IM1)

One participant said "I think the Standards regime was important... [for] articulating the need for whole-of-life management rather than just the accumulation of an archival collection" (IM5) and felt it was overall really strong, with a softer approach working well.

While two participants did not necessarily approve of the high level approach, which leave standards open to interpretation, they both felt that this was at least intentional, with one conceding "generally standards are not prescriptive." (IM1)

The same participant commented "I am astonished in a good way that they're reviewing it after two years, because...some of the earlier standards just sat there and sat there and sat there and then they never did anything about it." (IM1)

The other participant was more sceptical:

> "I think when they combined the standards into one, I think that actually confused a whole lot of people 'cause it actually lifted everything up a level, and now with the latest one it's lifting it up again...and I'm not sure why... I'm not sure what the rationale for doing that is..." (IM2)

They followed up by commending the work done throughout the iterations to clarify the wording of standards.

One participant noted the debate between high level and prescriptive, principles- or requirements-based standards was not unique to New Zealand, describing it as a dynamic space internationally with professionals uncertain about the best way to position them. Another, also reflecting about international development, believes the shift towards principles-based standards is the way to go.

Audits

Interviewees were quick to point out the failings of the audit system when asked about areas that could have been improved on.

"It's just been a failure. Full stop. It's wasted people's time" [IM1] one participant commented, reasoning "I suspect that's because they [Archives New Zealand] just didn't want to do it..." [IM1] while another "got the impression Archives New Zealand itself got some rather cold feet about the whole auditing process." [IM3]

One participant who, looking back, was "no longer convinced that there was a genuine will at the political level to take a...strong compliance-oriented approach." [IM5] They felt that the audit programme initially was discussed in relation to compliance but became: "more of a monitoring, analysis and diagnostic tool towards the later stages." [IM5]

Two participants stressed in particular that the audit results did not accurately reflect the realities of records management in public service departments, with one attributing this to at least one department's loss of funding and staff. As a result, some records managers thought "'oh what's the point?'" [IM2] while others "took it the other extreme and decided it was going to be the catalyst for doing a whole bunch of other stuff." [IM2] This is reflected in one participant's comment that "it's our ammunition, you know, to tell a Chief Executive this, that and the other thing." [IM1]

Participants were also critical of the process of selecting auditors, the lack of the auditors' practical experience, which then translated into the above mentioned inaccurate results, and written feedback which could be difficult to interpret. Seeking guidance from the auditors post-audit was also reported as being difficult. "The

bottom line is if you've been audited you want to be able to take some practical action as a result." [(IM2)]

Despite the strong criticism of the audit process, interviewees were quick to balance negative experiences, explaining that it is the negative stories which get told most often and shape the community's perception. One of the more vocal interviewees commented:

> *"The fact that at the moment they've sort of paused on the auditing and they're re-looking at the audit thing I think is entirely appropriate and sensible and a really positive thing, 'cause it shows that they also are aware that 'ok we've done this, we now need to stop, think...work out what we've learnt, what are we actually trying to achieve.'"* [(IM2)]

4.4 Reflections

When taking their records management experience in into consideration in the context of the PRA, participants were given the chance to reflect upon the changes they have seen and what that meant. They expressed their experiences and views in the context of impact, and how they see the future of records management unfolding.

Comments generally focused on the positive impact the PRA has had on the records management profession in New Zealand. Some of the comments regarding improvements had a negative tone. One described records management as being less marginalised than it used to be, while another said "I actually think that lifted the profile and certainly avoided an...increased irrelevance and obsolescence." [(IM5)]

On a practical level participants had experienced improvement in records managers' ability to speak within their organisations about the PRA and an increasing demand for information managers in various organisations.

Another participant was much more positive, believing the PRA to have had "an observable and noticeable effect of professionalising." [(IM4)] They attribute this to the environment in which it was written and passed, which created an atmosphere of creativity with technological development, noting the flexible attitude towards the

breadth of people allowed to participate. As a result, the New Zealand environment has fostered a "diaspora" [(IM4)] of records managers able to occupy other information roles: "you can find them in data management space, in the open data space, in the privacy space, so basically knitting together a far more coherent information space."
[(IM4)]

An outlier to this positivity was the comment that current records management "is just in a shambles, I just don't see any future for records managers in their current set-up...they have literally no control over what's happening in their agencies despite what they might tell you." [(IM3)] The participant suggests there needs to be a shift in mentality. Another participant felt the same, suggesting the shift occur within the occupational culture to "make recordkeeping something that happens in the background" [(IM2)] rather than being the people who say no. Participants shared the similar opinion that the future of records management and the PRA lay in capture processes and facilitating access to information, rather than disposal. This sentiment was also reflected in comments from four of the participants who feel electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS), at least in their current iterations, have run their course as a transition between paper and electronic records. The fifth made similar comments regarding the PRA, saying that as "transitional legislation, it still puts emphasis on control over disposal at the end of a record's life." [(IM5)]

5. Discussion

This section will analyse and interpret the findings, organised by the global themes identified above. It will also discuss themes that had been expected to feature prominently, but were not identified by participants. Based on these the paper will then make recommendations for further study.

5.1 Pre-Act

Findings from the experiences of participants show that amongst themselves and the wider community there was a strong drive to replace the Archives Act 1957 in order to strengthen the role of Archives New Zealand, and to shift the emphasis from preservation to creation of records. Their experiences support those examined in the

literature review, which demonstrated that the attempts to make this change spanned decades and faced many obstacles.

The findings relating to the time prior to the passing of the legislation are important in determining what participants understood to be the main factors contributing to the need to change. The findings suggest the Act has successfully introduced the concept of creation of records, in line with the records continuum model, upgrading the legislation from "custodial" to what Hurley might refer to as "second generation Act", which saw Archives New Zealand move from a "passive recipient of records" to taking "a more activist view" (1998, p.392). Their comments also highlight the failing of Archives New Zealand, pre-Act, to meaningfully influence disposal, and anticipation that this would be impacted by the introduction of the PRA.

Participant experiences also support the literature which views the 1980s and 1990s as a time of experimentation and development of information cultures within government. The comment regarding knowledge management as a sexy, money-making version of records management adds to the theory that this was a stepping stone towards establishing records management as a key component for any organisation. While knowledge management fell by the wayside, records management persisted.

The tensions between Archives New Zealand and the Department of Internal Affairs as experienced by participants is important to note. Much of the findings provide context that demonstrate the mind-set records managers approach the PRA with, and it is also important to understand what the regulatory body experienced. The fast passage of the PRA into law demonstrates, perhaps, the pressure applied to Archives New Zealand during this time. It is certainly an important aspect to consider, as the language used, such as "urban legend" [IM2], suggests that it has embedded itself into the narrative of New Zealand records management culture.

5.2 Implementation Challenges

Resourcing challenges were discussed by participants, both in the context of records management programmes within public service departments, and those faced by

Archives New Zealand. Understanding and exploring these commonalities between two groups currently divided may be helpful in developing a better relationship. The potential for this is demonstrated by the participant who noted the lack of meaningful or sustained input by the regulatory body, but believed that the organisation wanted to interact with departments more. The data also shows that historically restrictive resourcing has played a role in developing the occupational culture of records managers, as well as the wider information culture within New Zealand, by providing opportunities to be creative with technology solutions.

Strong recognition from the participants that Archives New Zealand struggled with its new regulatory role is meaningful given how participants chose to discuss this challenge. While critical language was used, sometimes with exasperation, the participants also showed understanding and sympathy toward the organisation. This supports the potential for the relationship between Archives New Zealand and the records community to improve. Again, it is important that the data gathered from participants enables a picture to be built of Archives New Zealand in comparison with records managers, and provide balance when considering the actions of both and where experiences have come from. This is demonstrated by the participant who suggests rather than being fearful of their new role, leaders within the organisation chose to be purposefully cautious.

One of the challenges most prevalent across themes and participants was that of communication. The participants attributed their experiences with communication to a number of misunderstandings between Archives New Zealand and the records community, best demonstrated by the differing understandings of the role of compliance. This inability to communicate, whether due to indecision or speaking to an unreceptive audience, greatly contributed to the perception that the audit programme was a failure. Conflicting comments relating to the legislation's intention to provide clarification suggest that information was not disseminated to all groups in a direct and concise manner. Overall the challenge of communication seems to have provoked distrust of the mechanisms in place to regulate public records, in the eyes of records managers.

Another significant challenge to the success of the Act was occupational culture. This impact is interesting when juxtaposed with that of communication. While communication was readily identified by participants as having been a problem, occupational culture has been uncovered through the data analysis phase. Participants freely discussed professional traits, however none expanded this to the wider theme. The findings built a picture of the records management occupational culture currently existing in New Zealand. It has been suggested that occupational cultures unique to individual countries may form based on "a common educational background...and the shared contact with others in the occupation" (Schein, 1996, as cited by Oliver, 2011, p.95). The occupational culture of records management has developed through its attempts to renew legislation, shared educational experiences in Australia, and representation by a strong professional association - ARANZ.

Oliver suggests in times of change and "profound disruption" a professional group may come together and resist, which seems to correlate with the implementation of the Public Records Act, and particularly the audits regime (p.97). Considering the varying descriptions given by participants, the attitudes of records managers (when presented with situations contrary to their expectations) seem highly combative, but also suggest an expectation to be mistreated.

Despite not falling within the scope of the paper, the participants often referenced other records management sectors in their discussions. Particularly significant were the comments around government groups who opposed their inclusion under the PRA, as it seems resources were redirected to work with, for example, tertiary education institutions, away from public sector departments previously under the 1957 legislation. In a talk presented at the 2002 ARANZ conference Grant Wills explains tertiary resistance to inclusion, detailing a rejection of the notion that the government may own information, and the need to protect academic freedom (p.3-4). Participants' experience of and desire to discuss these challenges demonstrates that factions within the community remain entwined in their shared experiences, and is worth exploring further.

5.3 Success and Failure

Records management standards released by Archives New Zealand reaped the highest praise from participants, which ranged from begrudging to glowing reviews. Overall, participants felt that having standards was worthwhile and good for the community. There was also recognition that the organisation had recently been taking steps to systematically review their work and make necessary amendments. This is a positive sign for the relationship between Archives New Zealand and the public sector departments. While at times unbridled criticism was thrown at the audit programme, there was similar recognition that the current evaluation was good, and that the recordkeeping community would likely perceive it as such.

The findings suggest that the biggest factors in the failure of the audit programme were Archives New Zealand's change of stance regarding compliance and subsequently being unable to effectively communicate that change. The failure of the audits has had serious consequences. According to a participant there was at least one instance of job loss due to an inaccurately positive audit result. It has also negatively impacted the occupational culture of the group, as shown by the defiant and defeatist attitudes described by the participants.

5.4 Reflections

Participants strongly believed that the introduction of the PRA was positive for enhancing records management as a profession and raising its profile within organisations. It was encouraging to hear that New Zealand's wider information environment demonstrated creativity, and that records management experience was able to extend beyond its professional bounds. It was not observed, however, to extend into archival roles, despite the continuum model's "unifying concept of records inclusive of archives" (McKemmish, 2001, p. 334).

The negative tone of some participants suggests recognition that prior to the PRA their profession was at risk, and remains so today. While records managers may have shaken off the janitor image, the nay-sayer one remains. Participants were critical of this and believed the profession needed to alter its approach, some implying there would be no future for records management if they did not. Their

suggestion that the profession move towards asking what an organisation requires conveys an understanding of the identity axis on the records continuum model, particularly the impact actors have on the creation dimension. For example, Hitchcock found employees were often barriers to good records management due to "information hoarding" tendencies (Hitchcock, p.44).

Another significant finding was the attitude towards EDRMS and the continued focus of systems and legislation on disposal. The suggestion is that the focus instead lie with good metadata once records are created. These comments reflect a maturity in understanding of the records continuum model, as they correlate with the capture and organise dimensions. Improvement of these dimensions may have a positive effect on the fourth dimension, pluralise. If this view is shared across public service departments, that might be a contributor to the low level of disposal maturity found through the audit programme. The capture dimension seems to be embedded within records management practice, supporting the finding that the PRA has succeeded in this mandate.

5.5 Absent Themes

Through bracketing and analysis of the interview themes in comparison with the literature review it was found that one expected PRA experience was not discussed by the participants. It had been expected that, in the context of impact, participants would comment on the backbone of records management theory: that records are reliable, authentic, ensure accountability and remain useable. These principles can be found in both the PRA and Records Management Standard (Archives New Zealand, 2014a). They can also be found in international records management publications (ARMA International, 2014; State Records Authority of New South Wales, 2015). This mirrors the December issue of *Archifacts*, discussed in the literature review, which was also uncharacteristically absent of crucial records management principles.

It is not clear why participants did not discuss their experience of these principles impacting on the records management practices of public service departments. One potential reason, when accounting for what was discussed, is that the PRA is still in

an implementation phase, making it difficult to judge its influence on these factors. The text message investigation suggests there remain issues in this area, therefore perhaps the other challenges discussed have shaped the experience of the participants in a more meaningful way. This is an area that requires further investigation.

6. Recommendations for Further Research

Considering the participants' experiences with the different reactions of groups previously not covered by legislation, research into their experiences of the PRA and how it has impacted their work would be interesting. This could be conducted as a case study, comparing a number of different public offices, and would contribute to further understand how standards and the audit process were experienced, and contribute to guidance for their varied needs. It would be interesting to know both how organisational cultures have played a role, and to discover variances in occupational culture between department types.

Occupational culture of New Zealand records managers is worth researching as a standalone subject, to better understand the history of its development and how that has shaped what exists today. Content analysis of *Archifacts* could be undertaken, which would provide a sound basis for research specifically relating to records management in New Zealand.

It would be interesting to understand in more detail the consultation process that various stakeholders experienced surrounding the PRA. This could be compared with the consultation and communication they now experience, to understand what has changed and what may be improved on.

A more thorough and in-depth investigation into the audit programme would also be interesting. However, this might be better undertaken once the revised programme has been introduced and completed, to assess the difference in experiences and effectiveness. This would likely demonstrate growth from Archives New Zealand as the regulatory body, and would enable an examination into the development of its relationship with records management stakeholders.

Another interesting study may be an examination of the Records Continuum model within a public organisation. This could examine to what extent the capture dimension has been embedded within the organisational culture, what processes are in place to facilitate the capture and organisation dimension, and then compare that against the organisation's ability to fulfil dimension four, pluralise. Such a study may reveal whether the records continuum principles are implicit within everyday practice, which aspects of the PRA enable this, and whether the fourth dimension is better achieved when dimensions two and three are embedded.

7. Conclusion

The intent of this research was to understand the development and subsequent impact of the Public Records Act 2005 on public service departments. In doing so the research hoped to understand what aspects of this may have contributed to the lack of recordkeeping maturity, as shown by the 2014/15 audit results.

The study found that both departments and the regulatory body, Archives New Zealand, faced many challenges in embedding the PRA and its elements into everyday practice. One of the largest challenges that seems to have touched every aspect is the occupational culture of records managers. This culture was shown to have developed during the second half of the 20th century, often in reaction to adversity. The findings also suggest that this culture was not fully understood by Archives New Zealand. The pressure to pass the Bill contributed to the organisation's inability to fully realise and account for the needs of this group. There exists here a great opportunity for further study.

Communication also affected the embedding of the Act. The findings suggest that there was a schism between the expectations of records managers and the regulatory body, particularly in relation to how audits would be conducted, and to what ends.

While these communication and occupational culture challenges have negatively impacted stakeholder perceptions of the PRA, and the audit results suggest departments have not achieved the expected level of records management maturity, this is somewhat contradicted by the agreeance of participants that the introduction

of the Act has had a tangible positive impact on the professionalisation of records management. This includes greater recognition from those outside the profession, but also acknowledgement that if the profession does not change it will remain at risk.

As much as the requirement for public service departments to create records has become embedded over the past decade, disposal (represented by the pluralise dimension of the records continuum model) continues to pose a concern. Comments from participants go some way in explaining this, suggesting a lack of hands-on involvement from Archives New Zealand and a growing irrelevance of EDRMS in the digital age, as storage costs decrease and demands for access grow.

Overall it seems the distrust and scepticism of the records management community toward Archives New Zealand as a regulatory body, as observed in the literature review and reiterated during interviews, has not been resolved. Comments suggest this division has grown. While participants were happy to ruminate on the future of records management, often theorising how the profession might improve, none speculated on the future relationship between Archives New Zealand and the records management community.

It is hoped the findings in this paper may facilitate the development of a reciprocal relationship between public service departments and Archives New Zealand, in line with the philosophy of the records continuum model. The recommendations for further research will enable a better understanding of New Zealand's unique information cultures, ensuring public records continue to be created to maintain government accountability and preserve the nation's identity for future generations.

Word Count: 12, 007 (excluding table of contents, references, and appendices)

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Appendix A – Public Service Departments

Public Service Departments in New Zealand 2016	
● Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority	● Ministry of Education
● Crown Law Office	● Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
● Department of Conservation	● Ministry of Health
● Department of Corrections	● Ministry of Justice
● Department of Internal Affairs	● Ministry of Maori Development
● Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	● Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
● Education Review Office	● Ministry of Social Development
● Government Communications Security Bureau	● Ministry of Transport
● Inland Revenue Department	● Ministry of Women's Affairs
● Land Information New Zealand	● New Zealand Customs Service
● Ministry for Culture and Heritage	● Serious Fraud Office
● Ministry for Primary Industries	● State Services Commission
● Ministry for the Environment	● Statistics New Zealand
● Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	● The Treasury
● Ministry of Defense	

Appendix B – Participant Email Invitation

Kia ora [participant name],

My name is Leah Pengelly and I am a Masters student in the School of Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW).

As part of my studies I am conducting a research project exploring ten years of the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA), which has been approved by the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

In consideration of your influential role in New Zealand recordkeeeping I would really appreciate it if you would be prepared to discuss the implementation and impact of the PRA from your expert perspective.

You can read more about the project in the following attached files:

- Participant Information Sheet
- Participant Consent Form

If you are able to participate please indicate your availability using the confidential poll. Any suggestions you may have as to others willing to participate are much appreciated.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact either myself (pengelleah@myvuw.ac.nz or 022 315 1393) or my supervisor, Dr. Gillian Oliver, at the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington (gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz or 04 463 7437).

Thank you for your time,

Leah Pengelly

Appendix C – Interview Guide, Participant Information Sheet, and Participant Consent Form

Interview Guide

Topics to be explored, as appropriate:

Public Records Act 2005, creation
Public Records Act 2005, implementation
Impact on recordkeeping practices in public offices
Archives New Zealand advice and guidelines
Challenges of implementation
Success, failures, and their contributing factors
Government recordkeeping in the future

Standard questions:

1. Please tell me about your current role and responsibilities
2. Please tell me about your experience with the Public Records Act 2005
3. What impact do you think the Public Records Act 2005 has had on public office recordkeeping in New Zealand, and the wider New Zealand society?

These questions will guide the interview, and will be used if the topics do not occur organically. Other questions may be asked in order to clarify the phenomenon being explored, in reaction to participant answers.

The confidentiality of both participants and any organisation they may have or are currently working for will also be extended to any individuals mentioned during the course of interviews. All data gathered during the interviews will be password protected and disposed of two years after the completion of the project.

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title: The Public Records Act 2005 – Ten Years On

Researcher: Leah Pengelly, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies, this research project is designed to explore the implementation and impact of the Public Records Act on recordkeeping in the New Zealand Public Sector, ten years on.

By understanding the perceptions of those with experience at various stages of the process, it is hoped this research will provide insight into the current state of New Zealand recordkeeping, and add to the current body of knowledge.

Victoria University requires, and has granted, approval from the School's Human Ethics Committee for this project.

I am inviting Information Management professionals with experience relating to the creation and/or implementation of the Public Records Act 2005 to participate in this research. Participants will be asked to take part in an interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes. Permission will be asked to record the interview, and a summary of the interview will be sent to participants for checking.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research. This information may also be submitted for publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor, Dr Gillian Oliver.

The research report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management, and subsequently deposited in the University Library. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so until May 9th, 2016, when the data will be analysed. Any data provided up to the time of withdrawal will be excluded and destroyed. All data collected from participants will be destroyed within two years after the completion of the project.

I also invite you to suggest other professionals who may be willing to contribute to this research.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at pengelleah@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone 0223151303, or you may contact my supervisor Dr Gillian Oliver at gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 463-7437.

Thank you for your time,
Leah Pengelly

Participant Consent Form

Research Project Title: The Public Records Act 2005 – Ten Years On

Researcher: Leah Pengelly, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project, without having to give reasons, by e-mailing pengelleah@vuw.ac.nz by the 9th of May, 2016.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and their supervisor, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others.

I understand that, if this interview is audio recorded, the recording and transcripts of the interviews will be erased within 2 years after the conclusion of the project. Furthermore, I will have an opportunity to check the summary of the interview.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

☐　　　I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

☐　　I agree to this interview being audio recorded.

Signed:

Name of participant:

Date: