



RHSQ

Royal Historical Society of Queensland

Royal Historical Society of Queensland
P.O. Box 12057
George Street Post Shop Q 4003

Telephone (07) 3221 4198; Fax (07) 3221 4698

ABN 34 217 251 028

Web site: www.queenslandhistory.org.au

Commissariat Store
115 William Street
Brisbane

6 March 2008

Freedom of Information Review Secretariat
Freedom of Information & Privacy Unit
Department of Justice & Attorney-General
G.P.O. Box 149
Brisbane Q 4001

Dear Sir,

The Society values the role of Freedom of Information for the historical research community in Queensland. We supported the introduction of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* to assist researchers access files in recent decades. We note the review panel's emphasis on technological change in records management and the need for the efficient management of the provision of access to those records.

However, it is chiefly Term of Reference 9(g) which we wish to address. In this respect it is records older than 30 years and not yet in the custody of Queensland State Archives that we express a cautionary note for your consideration. Provision of access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* to these records is extremely expensive both for the researcher and for the government agency in arranging access. Accordingly we advocate rapid decision making within government to organise transfer of these permanent status records to Queensland State Archives for arrangement and description of open access, and hence removal of this group of records into the domain of access under the *State Records Act*. We recommend that procedures be implemented for open access to researchers at no cost to them. This would overcome an apparent anomaly in administration of Freedom of Information legislation.

We also urge that where applicants seeking access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* to records which are held on open access at Queensland State Archives, the researcher be directed to Queensland State Archives to undertake the research themselves - rather than inspect the records under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* at high cost as has occurred in some instances. We are happy to discuss these points in more detail with the panel.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ruth S. Kerr
Hon Secretary