

ASA WA Professional Development Day 2026
Records In Contexts

The 2026 Professional Development day focuses on Records in Contexts (RiC), the new International Council on Archives (ICA) standard for describing records. It is transforming how we describe records and access them, allowing to move to a more contextualized, flexible, accurate, dynamic, and connected approach. By linking records with people, places, and events, RiC enhances discovery, access, and understanding—essential for today’s digital world. Developed by the Expert Group on Archival Description (EGAD) since 2013, the RiC Application Guidelines was released in late 2025, complementing the Foundations, Model, and Ontology documents (<https://github.com/ICA-EGAD>).

We are pleased to present a full day workshop exploring RiC, implementation of its principles in government archives and technological developments. The workshop will be held in person in Perth, WA and online.

Date:	Friday May 22 nd 2026
Time:	9am-4:30pm AWST
Venue:	The Great Southern Room, State Library of Western Australia An online link will be provided prior to workshop
Cost:	
Registration (Standard Member) (In-person)	\$90
Registration (Non-Members) (In-person)	\$150
Affiliate (RIMPA/ALIA/ARANZ) (In-person)	\$90
Online (Teams, unlimited places)	\$70

Please note there are 40 in-person places available. Catering will be provided. Accessibility please note that there are currently major construction works underway at the Perth Cultural Centre. For up to date accessibility advice please check: <https://www.cits.wa.gov.au/infrastructure/perth-cultural-centre-rejuvenation/perth-culture-centre-accessibility>

Prior Learning

The PD is aimed at assumed levels of knowledge ranging from beginner. Registrants with prior learning or with specific learning needs are invited to contact the organizers via email (anniecameron02@gmail.com) to assist presenters with selection of content and learning outcomes.

Who Should Attend

Archivists, collection managers and curatorial staff working in cultural heritage spaces such as archives, libraries, and museums. Community members responsible for archival collections who seek professional guidance on the archival workflow.

Program

- 9:00-9.15am Registrations
- 9:15-9:20 Acknowledgement of Country and housekeeping
Annie Cameron, Convenor (ASA WA)
- 9:20-10:10 The International Council on Archives' (ICA) Records in Contexts (RiC) framework for archival description: what it means for archivists in Australia and its place in the long journey towards standardised archival description
Presenter: Adrian Cunningham
- 10:10-10:35 Morning Tea
- 10:35-11:15 Implementing ArchivesSpace at Queensland State Archives
Presenter: Elizabeth Hawkins
- 11:15-12:00 Technology implementation considerations for RiC
Presenter: Piers Higgs
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-1:45 Safeguarding the Memory of State in Western Australia
Presenter: Damian Shepherd
- 1:45-2:15 Panel Discussion and feedback
- 2:15-2:30 Afternoon tea
- 2:30-4:30 Records in Contexts Card game (in person participants only)
Online participants are encouraged to download and play the RiC card game with your local team.

Session outlines**The International Council on Archives' (ICA) Records in Contexts (RiC) framework for archival description: what it means for archivists in Australia and its place in the long journey towards standardised archival description – Adrian Cunningham**

After 13 years of development, the ICA's Experts Group on Archival Description recently completed work on the initial versions of all four parts of its 'Records in Contexts' (RiC) framework for archival description. RiC represents a quantum leap forward in international consensus on how archival description should be done in the 21st century. This presentation will provide an overview of the development of international standards for archival description and metadata, comparing those approaches with the conceptual model that underpins the Australian 'Series System'. After facing many years of international hostility and incomprehension, the power and logic of series system thinking has now been recognised in the design of RiC. While RiC may present overseas archivists with a challenging paradigm shift in approach to archival description, Australian archivists should find the transition to RiC to be a relatively easy conceptual evolution. RiC is nothing more than an enhanced and enriched version of the series system. This paper describes the four parts of RiC, focusing in particular on the conceptual model and its application guidelines.

Adrian Cunningham is a past President of the ASA and a Fellow of both the ASA and the International Council on Archives (ICA). He has been a member of the ICA's Experts Group on Archival Description since its inception in 2012. Before that he was Secretary of the ICA's Committee on Descriptive Standards, 2001-2004, and Chair of the ASA's Committee on Descriptive Standards, which published *Describing Records in Context: A Guide to Australasian Practice* in 2007. He edited the ASA publication *The Arrangement and Description of Archives Amid Administrative and Technological Change: Essays and Reflections by and about Peter J. Scott* (2010). He is currently the Head of the Australian Delegation to the International Standards Organization's Committee on Archives and Records Management, TC46/SC11, and Chair of that Committee's working group on metadata.

Implementing ArchivesSpace at Queensland State Archives – Elizabeth Hawkins

Queensland State Archives (QSA) launched its new archival management system, ArchivesSpace, in 2020. At the time, the Records in Context (RiC) standard for archival description was still under development; however, the descriptive model adopted by QSA shared conceptual similarities with RiC. This presentation explores the key decisions and challenges encountered by QSA in configuring the ArchivesSpace system to effectively address the intricate requirements of managing and describing archival records in all formats within the context of a modern Australian environment.

Elizabeth Hawkins is the Manager of the Digital Archives team at Queensland State Archives and has extensive experience working in archives and collection management. She was heavily involved in the design of the QSA implementation of ArchivesSpace which included changes to QSA's archival descriptive model to accommodate born digital records. Elizabeth has worked in most areas of QSA including access, collections and appraisal.

Technology implementation considerations for RiC – Piers Higgs

Gaia Resources has implemented a number of archival management systems (including both QSA and the State Records Office) across Australia. From this experience Piers will talk about the opportunities and changes that RiC will mean for existing archival systems - what works, what doesn't and potential future development pathways for systems in Australia.

Piers Higgs is the founder and CEO of Gaia Resources, a Western Australian consultancy that for over 20 years has responsibly delivered sustainable technology solutions to make the world a better place. Originally a spatial technologist and ecologist, Piers has found a keen interest in archives and collections and has led the development of the capability and capacity in this area within Gaia Resources, who now provide services to archival organisations across Australia and beyond.

Safeguarding the Memory of State in Western Australia – Damian Shepherd

The State Archivist and Executive Director State Records Office, Damian Shepherd, will discuss opportunities for ASA members and associates to engage with the State Records Office WA over the next 12-months to improve discoverability and access to State archives in WA. Damian will discuss the work of a new State Archives Management Committee and other initiatives being led by the State Records Office WA. These take a staged and collaborative approach to building expertise and experience in working with State archives and opening new opportunities to safeguard and explore the memory of the State in WA.

Records in Contexts card game (in-person participants only)

Online participants are encouraged to play the RiC card game with your local team.

The game, with accompanying documents (slides on objectives and rules, and guidelines for preparing the game and for facilitating it), is available here, under CC BY-SA 4.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), in English and in French:

The card game itself can be printed from the PDF files we provide there (files named 'RiC_Card_Game_ICA_Barcelona_2025_en.pdf' or 'RiC_Card_Game_ICA_Barcelona_2025_fr.pdf').

Once printed, the game can be used during in person workshops, as a good discovery tool for beginners. It focuses on RiC-CM; through a real use case, it helps to understand what the conceptual model is. It can be played by teams of 4 to 8 people. Each team must have a printed card game and be accompanied by a facilitator who knows RiC-CM and the use case very well.

Download link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QK8URh8VDhldGSYM4NIFDYPvKjlk9OCC>