# Multiple rights in records: the role of recordkeeping informatics

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**Introduction**

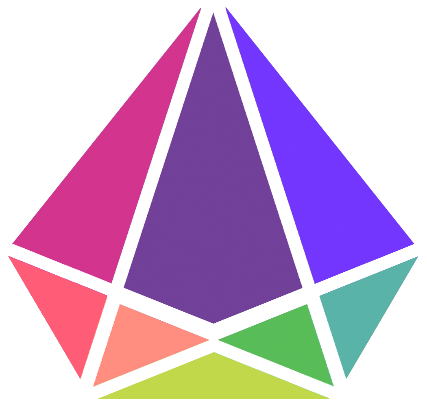
The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to a paradigm shift in ways of thinking about current recordkeeping environments. We begin by explaining recordkeeping informatics, a continuum based approach to managing authoritative information in the ever shifting, complex and technologically challenging times that confront all of us, including organisations. We then develop these ideas through a case study of recordkeeping requirements for those who as children experience out of home care as a result of child welfare and protection policies. Out of home care is the term used in Australia for “the care of children and young people up to 18 years who are unable to live with their families, often due to child abuse and neglect. It involves the placement of a child or young person with alternate caregivers on a short- or long-term basis” (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2015). These experiences place lifelong identity, memory and accountability needs on the governments and organisations providing these services. Our case study will explore the macro and micro challenges that arise for individuals, organisations, governments and societies as a demonstration of the utility of recordkeeping informatics in designing archival futures in which multiple rights in records are embedded.

**Recordkeeping informatics**

The development of recordkeeping informatics has been underway for the past eight years. The original motivation for this work was the need for an up-to-date textbook based on records continuum thinking to support teaching and learning for current recordkeeping. The second edition of Jay Kennedy and Cherryl Schauder’s *Records Management: A guide to corporate recordkeeping*, is the only title currently in print to fit the bill, but its publication date of 1998 means that the content, although still valid, is inevitably dated. During our first meeting to discuss the outline of an updated text, it became clear that it would not be possible to address current recordkeeping requirements adequately within the constraints of what had developed as a discipline and occupation in the paper world.

The definition of informatics that we use explains the discipline as ‘ the science of information. It studies the representation, processing, and communication of information in natural and artificial systems. Since computers, individuals and organizations all process information, informatics has computational, cognitive and social aspects (Fourman, 2003).This definition emphasises that informatics is not just about technology, but is inclusive of individuals and socially constructed entities also playing key roles. This definition also notes that ‘informatics’ can be used in combination with the name of a discipline, to denote ‘… the specialization of informatics to the management and processing of data, information and knowledge in the named discipline Fourman, 2003). In this case, the discipline is recordkeeping; the systems, activities and processes needed for efficient and effective management of information for accountability and evidential purposes.

The main features of recordkeeping informatics are detailed *Recordkeeping Informatics for a Networked Age*, a result of the eight years of writing and discussion of the concept (Upward et.al., 2018), and are only briefly summarised here. A matrix (see Figure 1) consisting of two building blocks (continuum thinking and metadata) together with three facets for analysis (information culture, business processes and access) provides a framework encompassing the key areas for consideration.



**Figure 1: The Recordkeeping Informatics Matrix**

Recordkeeping informatics is a sense making approach, aimed at creating situational awareness of the complex, contested and dynamic environments in which recordkeeping takes place, to guide decision making and systems design in order to identify and meet evidence, memory and accountability requirements. A long-standing theme in Australian records continuum literature has been that life-cycle models for institutionalizing archives no longer work. Whether the processes relate to the formation of an archive within current recordkeeping activities or take place after a lapse of time, thought about the creation of the archive itself should precede predicting its management over spacetime. A continuum based informatics approach focuses attention on the point of creation across the breadth and diversity of the archival multiverse whether it relates to cultural heritage informatics, medical informatics, health informatics, or any of the myriad of other prefixes that can be put in front of the word. All forms of informatics are dependent upon the quality of the archives they form, an argument that should be easy to present to others and when presented effectively will expand the breadth and depth of interest in archival formation processes across all disciplines and within and across all organisations. Recordkeeping informatics, as one specialization within that breadth can provide a model for the development of archival depth, and no specialization provides a more significant testing ground for the development of ethical approaches than an activity that can be so readily be used for liberating or repressive purposes.

As with the records continuum thinking and modelling on which it is based, recordkeeping informatics is often best understood in seeing it performed. In the next section we outline what we believe is a compelling use case through which to explore recordkeeping informatics, namely how to ensure that the systems set up to protect children from abuse and neglect do not themselves cause harm – a grand recordkeeping and societal challenge.

**Recordkeeping for childhood out of home care**

The details of this complex, multi-faceted use case are outlined in Appendix A. It has been chosen as an example for a number of reasons. It is a problem facing many countries as they grapple with the consequences of recordkeeping practices of the past and how to transform these practices into an alternative and more responsive future. As well as a number of inquiries in Australia over the past 20 years, Ireland, the UK, Scotland, Sweden, Canada, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Germany etc. have or are investigating the institutional abuse of children. (Evans et al,2015) It interfaces to issues of significant social concern, grappling with complexities in managing highly sensitive personal information. It highlights the very complex set of issues that must be considered when addressing significant change within organisations – both in terms of digital transformation and emerging individual rights to control information.

Our case study is fictional, but seems to resonate with international audiences. We tested this case scenario in three European contexts, and of course, in our own, Australian context over 2016-17. The problems faced by those who were, for reasons completely beyond their personal control, raised in out of home care provide a sharp focus for exploring approaches through the multiple lens of recordkeeping informatics. Each lens brings with it a new way of focussing on issues, revealing the complexity of the environment and the interplays with which any solution must grapple. Put together in new ways they outline the scope and dimensions of changes that need to be taken into consideration before systemic change can occur. The recordkeeping informatics approach positions practical steps that may be taken in an organisational context firmly within a changing, complex social environment. The social and the organisational, the personal and the corporate, the legislative compliance and the emerging concepts of ethical recordkeeping are all surfaced using this approach to this particular set of circumstances.

The core of the recordkeeping informatics approach is to determine what perspectives a recordkeeping approach brings to the necessary inter-disciplinarity needed within organisations to effect change. Our assertion is that the parts of the analysis enabled by recordkeeping informatics are always going to be more complex than the whole (Latour et. al, 2012). – the notion of simplexity, that it is only when you recognise the complexity that the agenda for action becomes clearer.

**Building block: continuum thinking**

Continuum thinking derives from our much longer tradition of Records Continuum theory and praxis. At a theoretical level it connects recordkeeping practice to currents of social thinking which have traditionally accompanied huge expansions of critical thought (Upward et al, 2011). Continuum thinking recognizes that simplistic, linear certainties are not appropriate to the complexities of the contested, multi-technology, digital environment. Rather it positions records as a still point in a continuous flicker of movement, recognising change is a constant and that everything is in a state of becoming, interconnected and continuous. It moves away from thinking about certainties, asserting that the fundamental nature of movement and change will fuel a recurrence of specific instances of particular problems. In that environment, no one should seek definitive approaches, rather approach problems with a creative impulse to recognise broad patterns and seek to re-purpose older ways of approaching similar problems. It also recognises that all information disciplines (amongst others) are critically involved in addressing the issues of managing digital information from multiple, convergent but not identical, perspectives.

Our case study is clearly located in the present in a fictional society facing a huge social change around managing children at risk and how to best help and support those children through their situation, not only in the present, but for their lifelong struggles with identity, perception of self and links to family and community. These questions are much broader than a recordkeeping frame of reference. Such endeavours involve multiple disciplines, and reflect a significant social change to the perception and management of children. The clear social shift in thinking about children’s rights can be traced to the impact of the UN Declaration of Rights for the Child from 1989, itself an outcome of recognition of human rights violations in many parts of the world.

The case study is located within a not for profit grouping of advocates for change, CARIL . The change they are after is fundamentally about recordkeeping – the advocates of CARIL are concerned with how children are recorded, represented and given access to the records of their out of home care experiences. They are challenging the way organisational records about children in this situation are created, organised, managed and pluralised. They are concerned not only with access to historical records for those who have experienced out of home care, but also to improve recordkeeping practices to ensure that children currently in out of home care systems do not have the same issues as those experienced by older Care Leavers.

The past and present co-exist in continuum fashion. A linear approach to the problems of recordkeeping only address instances of problems. The impact of records on people’s lives isn’t restricted to a particular moment in time, it reverberates throughout the life of an affected person, and is also being shown to have inter-generational repercussions is also being revealed (Lewis, 2017*).*To affect real change, the current practices of recordkeeping need to coexist with improved practices for addressing the records of the past. These are what they are, but the recordkeeping processes that surround them need to reflect more sophisticated understandings of their role in people’s lives as they seek to make sense of out of home care experiences.

Central to the concerns of CARIL are questions of ownership of the record. They assert that information about an individual is his/her personal information and should belong to them. This challenges the notion of traditional ownership of information which resides with the service provider or the funder of out of home care services. CARIL is asserting that personal information is a right belonging to an individual. There is no formal legal position that clearly identifies any such right, but the trend towards enabling more definition and control of actions that can be done involving personal information can be observed in privacy law and data protection regimes in Europe while being consistently rebuffed in terms of technology companies routinely re-using and re-selling personal information under potentially dodgy terms of service. This issue intersects a much broader debate about privacy, personal information and emerging rights.

At the same time the multiple rights and responsibilities of different disciplines involved in the compilation of a record of care are revealed. Counsellors in Australia, for example, have asserted very strict professional privilege rights to information created while the client/counsellor contact is made (Cossins and Pilkinton, 1996). This professional right is undoubtedly done with the intent of protecting the privacy of the individual from external parties not related to the counselling process. The notion arose in relation to access to such information during court cases trying allegations of rape. But the implications of such privilege when broadened out to other circumstances can act as a barrier to individuals being able to access records about their own experience.

Continuum thinking does not seek to fix or find a specific answer to particular problems, rather to position the reasoning about how to approach the specific instance within a broader context involving past, present, social, organisational and individual requirements, law and emerging thinking, all within a structured means of surfacing the tensions and complexities which will need to be considered, and positioned alongside conflicting requirements. Compromise and balance is often required in moving towards an achievable praxis in circumstances where accommodation of all requirements cannot be reached.

The move to consider more than one continuum reality involves using the multiplicity of continuum applications in the information space. It may be that a publishing continuum needs to be considered beside a records continuum and an information processing and information systems data continuum. There are intersections and richness to be found in considering multi-disciplinary approaches to how to approach information problems. These are not exclusive models, rather a recordkeeping perspective can be applied to all of the other continuum models, and vice versa. This is indeed the richness of interdisciplinary approaches that do not diminish or reduce one or other disciplinary approaches but allow differences to inform practice and creativity to thrive.

**Facets of analysis: information culture**

Recordkeeping informatics sees the site of implementation in terms of practical realities. At the moment this largely means within an organisational context, acknowledging that the notion of organisation is fluid and shifting with multiple organisations involved in delivering parts or aspects of services. And this is certainly the reality of out of home care, which has been delivered by various institutions and organisations in society over time. It may be that a church organisation, or a charity, provided the funding and staffing for out of home care. It may be that this was done with, or without, government oversight. At times it may be all of the above. If we take Australia as an example, different state governments have adopted different legislation and different levels of control over funding provided to a range of organisations providing out of home care. A single child may move between carers and institutions many time in their childhood.

Within Australia, this really very complex jurisdictional framework proves hugely problematic for a child. Their record of childhood is immediately fragmented, and the opportunity for confusion in responsibilities both during and after their out of home care experiences is multiplied. Children who reside in later life in jurisdictions other than that in which their care was given immediately find inconsistencies in approaching access to records. Records tend to represent an organisational view – what do organisations need to do to conduct their business, with that business being quite specifically defined in terms of answering for their conduct. In this view, the child tends to become a commodity to be reported upon. Recordkeeping in this sense becomes focussed on the business transaction and the records relating to a child reflect the organisation view.

Different organisations involved in the complex chain of responsibilities will have individual information cultures which may vary widely. All will devise recordkeeping to reflect their individual information culture. As society’s attitudes towards children change, so too does the expectations and requirements placed upon organisations to account for their actions. Where organisations are left to themselves to govern their own operations, the recordkeeping culture may be limited to the information culture within that organisations. Where oversight and formal agreements are entered into, as in cases where governments outsource the provision of placement and support services for children, those contractual obligations for recordkeeping may be more clearly defined by standards or expectations on how out of home care should be administered.

None the less, in all the myriad circumstances of regulation, the recordkeeping is focussed on the ‘business’ of delivering care to children. The ultimate participant in all of this network of organisations providing services is the child themselves. And the recordkeeping has only recently started focussing on the child in ways that call for meaningful participation of children and young adults in the decision making that impacts on their lives. They also seek to ensure that “adequate and appropriate information is conveyed to children and young people about their history, plans for their future, education, health and other important areas, as well as jurisdictional practices, policies and legislative requirements that relate to them” (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2011).

When that change of perspective is placed within organisations, recordkeeping changes to reflect and involve the child in the ‘business’ of out of home care. Understanding that the child is being recorded, being represented in the record brings a quite different perspective to the requirements of recordkeeping. This changed emphasis brings with it an understanding that the representations of a child in the record needs to be about more than the transactional. The child’s views, their thoughts and interactions with the various people involved in providing services must also be represented. Where a child is removed from family, the record becomes one of the major mechanisms to document those relationships to individual family members, to the child’s identity and to their cultural background. This shift in understanding significantly impacts the nature of the information culture within organisations. The responsibility to accurately, collaboratively and openly document specific circumstances of a child’s history become paramount. Recordkeeping becomes more than a reflection of transactions, and becomes a critical part of the identity of the child, relevant not just during episodes of out of home care, but throughout that individual’s life. Recordkeeping practices such as the creation of ‘Life story’ books which document key activities, relationships and achievements of a child’s life have now become incorporated into practice, along with detailed genograms created to record familial and cultural connections (Humphreys and Kertesz, 2015). But still, criticisms are made that these documents are largely created by carers or case workers rather than the children themselves, or that the maintaining of such resources suffer in time-pressed circumstances, or that they do not always accompany the child in their movement through multiple placements.

Using technology to transform what and how such records are created with, or on behalf of the child is currently being explored through development of web-based apps, actively recording the child’s wishes and experiences. And broadly speaking, there is agreement that such resources belong to the child from the time of their creation. But the long term sustainability of such endeavours is not yet discussed or thought through. And it is not sufficient to consider such records as the only record that is needed. The organisational recordkeeping view is valid for the purposes of administering out of home care environments. The child needs access to and rights in these organisational records too. They continue to contain the organisational interpretation of a child’s experience and evidence how they have fulfilled the parental responsibilities mandated in child protection legislation.

Putting these complex pieces together in terms of an information culture operating in any particular out of home care environment is essential to understanding what options exist to improve recordkeeping, how to bring the child’s involvement in active documentation of their wishes and experience, and supporting long term life chances for the children affected. Studying information culture, which includes the concerns of external stakeholders and advocates such as CARIL, can position practice to determine what recordkeeping interventions can be most effective, at what layer of the complex environment, and how to ensure that positive information cultures are created and sustained.

**Facets of analysis: business process analysis**

Within specific organisations the way activities are carried out critically affects the records which are, or which could be, created. Within recordkeeping informatics, we refer to records as cascading inscriptions, acknowledging that these occur in many places, but stressing that the ability to think of records as being part of a continuously moving cascade of documentation provides a new way of conceptualising context. This view stresses the context, and the linkage between documents which tend to be regarded as isolated reflections of actions, when filtered through technologies. Thinking of the connections, thinking of the relationships, and the consequences of documenting these simultaneous multiple cascades provides a further lens to analysing recordkeeping practices of the past, present and future.

In the context of the case study, how we bundle those cascading transcriptions making up the record alters with perspectives. CARIL is advocating the centrality of the child, but also the child in cascades of relationships with others. The child then is the central focus and the core mechanism to bundle transcriptions. With the technological environment enabling new ways of presenting information, there can be multiple simultaneous ways of bundling transactions together, to suit different purposes. The organisational must be served to ensure the accountability and monitoring roles, but the child’s view must also be available and central.

The notion of putting the child at the centre again changes the way business processes can be carried out. Active involvement in the creation of the record at all points where it relates to an individual changes the framing of business processes. If a child knows about records as they are being created and is made an active participant, the notion of closing the record to the child becomes redundant and counterproductive. Of course, there are questions of ensuring age appropriate knowledge for children. But in reality, as Care Leavers often remind us, when the experience is lived, there is not much point pretending that children don’t know.

Thinking in terms of bundling of business processes also permits a different perspective on what constitutes an organisation. In Weberian terms, an organisation tends to be a self-contained and self-governed organisation. But if we think of organisations as bundles of transactions, perhaps with a similar concept to ‘joined up services’ or supply chain models, then documenting the activities becomes cross-organisational. Information systems may then really become ‘architectures that define social relationships and organisational actions’ (Aakhus et.al, 2014. What would this, then, do to recordkeeping? A joined up recordkeeping system to which multiple organisational and individual actors contribute, all focussed on a child, recognising multiple rights and responsibilities, becomes possible, and perhaps capable of being realised utilising new technology opportunities.

At the same time, in the context of the case study, the technologies introduced in multiple (not joined up) organisations is creating a veritable tsunami of documentation. Young Care Leavers talk of the nightmare of being confronted with thousands and thousands of pages of documentation, printed out into flat paper versions, which document their journey through the child protection system. This tsunami of digital communications is preventing meaningful interpretation – obscurity through plenty perhaps. Is this the only way?

**Facets of analysis: access**

Recordkeeping informatics revisits Anthony Gidden’s powerful articulation of different needs within information – both as an allocative resource stressing the power of production within the ever expanding continuum, and as an authoritative resource which focusses on documentation as reliable evidence of action supporting space-time management, mutual associations and life-chances (Giddens, 1986). The case study illustrates quite clearly the importance of the authoritative perspective of information – the core of recordkeeping. Being able to access records which are authoritative, which represent the realities of the times, and which can be brought forward into multiple future environments can be clearly seen to illustrate what we mean by space-time management, mutual associations and life chances. Records for those who experience out of home care become the means by which identity, connection, understanding, and well being is nurtured and for those dealing with past childhood experiences where hopefully healing can take place.

But in contemporary organisations the representation of authoritative information is not always brought to the fore. Rather, the more obvious allocative view of information is paramount. This view tends to diminish the importance of multiple roles and perspectives, privileging retrieval above all else. This is the ‘Google search’ notion – if only immediate access to everything is possible, all will be well. In reality, as we all know as avid Google users, the resources are filtered through complex invisible and tailored algorithms, and we rarely look beyond the first page or two of the thousands of results. Thinking only in terms of allocative resources will comprehensively fail to meet the needs of people represented by CARIL.

For Care Leavers who are now adults, the question of access to records is pressing. To be denied records about a childhood which they have experienced is an affront. To have their case files read by others and then presented to them with huge redactions to protect the privacy of third parties is confronting and seems totally disrespectful. Mechanisms for determining who can see what, fail to provide the child/person centric view and also fail to account to the person who is at the heart of the record. Multiple legislative instruments purport to provide avenues for improving access, but the experience of many is that the poor recordkeeping of the past combined with the reluctance to compassionately interpret the intent of the instruments permitting access, combined with what seems to be a very defensive and fearful attitude in a culture of blame, all combine to present Care Leavers with a most unsatisfactory result when trying to access records.

**Building block: metadata**

The final piece of the recordkeeping informatics approach is the core importance of metadata. In the digital world, metadata is all. Content, without the connectors to other parts of the cascading inscription is meaningless because it is out of context. The connectors are the metadata. How we construct the bundles of information representing organisations, actions and processes are all reflected in metadata. The capability to provide granular access and rights to information of all kinds is in the metadata. And the ability to trace what has happened to information is in the metadata. This latter metadata is core to the recordkeeping part of informatics – the trail of action about who has done what, when and under what permissions is the guts of a recordkeeping approach to information. And it is as relevant to a specific data field in a database as it is to the management of a lines of code or to a collection of information resources controlled by specific governance rules. So recordkeeping metadata and this focus can be a major disciplinary contribution to any and every discipline and circumstance.

But professionally the ability to think about recordkeeping metadata needs to become more embedded in practice and agile in application. It is not about cataloguing content. It is about identifying where the data is currently being captured in technologies that allows verifiable assertions of authenticity and reliability to be made to capture contextual and transactional context.

Recordkeeping metadata can be viewed from a minute level or from a macro level. It can cascade through different scales of approach. Indeed the metadata models that serve recordkeeping can be thought of as a fractal, a recurring pattern which applies at any and every layer of aggregation, with different values associated to the same basic pattern of metadata.

All systems are built on metadata. The centrality of attention to recordkeeping metadata in the digital environment will be key to reflecting each and every facet of analysis, and in enabling the expansion of records into different environments across different time periods. The continuum concept of perdurance, persistence and identity through time, is built into metadata components which link together to enable interpretation and contextualisation. Building systems that acknowledge change but find mechanisms to allow past, present and future to connect is the ultimate goal of recordkeeping informatics’ focus on metadata. A vision that is unachievable in the ways in which recordkeeping metadata is conceived in current systems.

**So what does a recordkeeping Informatics view provide?**

A recordkeeping informatics view permits a focussing of attention on particular aspects of analysis. The specifics of information culture, business process and access need to be read against a particular circumstance. This provides a way of broadening and positioning a recordkeeping analysis from which specific actions can then be devised and prioritised. The building blocks, those aspects that are core to any recordkeeping informatics approach are the frame of reference brought to bear – clearly and firmly that of continuum thinking, along with the more micro and situated determination of recordkeeping metadata which is essential to the management of digital resources. Brought together in a coherent and connected framework, the recordkeeping informatics approach permits exploration in new technological realms. New and constantly emerging technologies need to be incorporated into practice. The new tools and technologies will keep coming. Recordkeeping professionals need to be able to assess their capacity to support evidence, memory and accountability needs in and through time and space, so as to identify and manage recordkeeping risks in their deployment along with impacting on their future design to better incorporate recordkeeping requirements.

Recordkeeping informatics provides a roadmap for thinking about short and long term management of authoritative information resources in a technology driven world where archiving takes place at the nano-second of creation. Setting up repeatable patterns (or fractals) for sustainable recordkeeping is the goal of the endeavour. Surfacing and applying these patterns will become one measure of our disciplinary success in a world being increasingly flooded with information sludge – so much, but with what meaning and how sustainable, for whom and with what assurances of good management for the multiple participants in records? We hope, perhaps optimistically, that it can do even more than that. Informatics is not a mere tack on to twentieth century ideas about recordkeeping processes. It is a way of addressing the technical, social and knowledge forming aspects of the archive in all of its ethical manifestations, providing a way of spreading an understanding of archives across the many forms of specialised informatics that are likely to be developed in this century and which in different use cases might need to be capable of working together if humanity is regularly to form future archives that serve adequate forms of authoritative information resource management.

In our workshops, the use of the case study focussed attention on just one example of complexity and individual rights over time. The case study discussion using the facets and building blocks of recordkeeping informatics revealed a richness and depth of discussion which surfaced different approaches and concerns from each angle of interpretation. Put together, these collectively create a rich and nuanced exploration of factors critical to recordkeeping which is then able to be persuasively brought to the table for discussion with other disciplinary colleagues, and alongside the voices of those with the lived experience and expertise. No one profession or advocate rules in this complex, ever changing technological world. But we need to focus on what we bring to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary discussions. Recordkeeping informatics is a powerful tool to use as the disciplinary articulation of recordkeeping in today’s information environment, and to guarantee that we are part of ensuring that archives of the future can better represent and manage complex rights in records .

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## **APPENDIX**

**RECORDKEEPING INFORMATICS**

**RECORDKEEPING FOR CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE**

Larasutia is, like other countries, facing real social concern over how to assist those children who are removed from their families for protection. The issues are current, but also Larasutia is recognising that the way it managed these children in the past, is, by today’s standards, not acceptable. The harm caused, both inadvertent and also sometimes by neglect or lack of attention, has been revealed to be substantial, life long, and often not addressed by individuals until considerable time has passed (as many as 33 years after the event where there has been sexual abuse).

Jen Stolen, Kate Advo and Ivor Surf are three survivors of such ‘care’ in Larasutia and are now advocates for children currently in care, as well as working closely to represent the community of people who have previously experienced out of home care. In particular they are committed to working with children currently in care to ensure that they don’t suffer the same silencing and continued impact of the violence that they themselves experienced.

Jen, Kate and Ivor are members of CARIL (Children-in-care Access to Records and Information in Larasutia). This strong advocacy group represents not only current children in out of home care, but also past care leavers. They act as advisors to a number of jurisdictional enquiries, with government bodies regulating out of home care and with providers of this type of care to improve practices for children. Recognising their work is unsustainable if not funded, CARIL has recently been given project support funding. You, Ima/r Newby have been appointed to support the work of Jen, Kate and Ivor to develop a proposal for a child-centric recordkeeping system.

A briefing paper has been prepared for you. The issues are really complex and intertwined. The briefing paper summarises current positions:

| Issue | CARIL’s position |
| --- | --- |
| Problems with third party privacy rules in obtaining access to records of the past and present | An individual should be able to access all information about themselves – with no exception |
| Vast volumes of email and electronic documents swamping requests for access to records of the present | Providing care leavers with too much, undifferentiated information, is almost as bad as not providing enough information – better, more sensitive approaches are needed |
| Rights of correction (annotation) of the official record | Why should the care leaver have to do this? This is a burden. Particularly for many care leavers whose education was scant and neglected. The official record is often offensive and wrong. We are investigating alternative documentation models to allow more than annotation rights |
| Ownership of the record/information about personal history and family history | The information about an individual and his/her family is their personal information and should belong to them, not some government department or service provider |
| Privileged access to records and information | We represent a community who have suffered considerable abuse, neglect and have often faced life-long problems because of this. We should be given access to everything as a part of a process of remediating past practices |
| Better recording of actions/incidents | We were the passive victims of a system in the past. We are committed to improving the systems of the present. We want the rights of the child recognised. We want the voice and wishes of the child to be recorded and heard. We want an end to judgemental comments on records. |

Each of these positions are part of CARIL’s advocacy to various bodies. But they are all underpinned by the belief in ownership and rights over personal information, regardless of who records, holds or manages it.

Meantime, there are always issues coming to CARILs attention for immediate action. The latest in a constant stream of things is news of a significant data breach in the care providers network, leaving personal information of children in care and their carers out there.