

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **Life membership an honour for Logan's records maestro**

When Meryl Bourke started a traineeship at Logan City Council in 1985, the organisation's records were paper-based and microfilm storage was just starting to be used.

Almost four decades later, that microfilm has been converted to PDF, and information has evolved from paper, faxes, and emails to social media and online communication platforms.

Meryl's extensive career in records and information management at Council – from trainee to Records Management Program Leader – has been recognised by the Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance (RIMPA Global) through two prestigious honours.

RIMPA presented Meryl with the 2023 J Eddis Linton Outstanding Individual Award for her significant contribution to the industry, as well as life membership.

In addition, she recently attended the 2023 ARMA International InfoCon conference in the United States after receiving a scholarship from RIMPA and ARMA.

Meryl, who lives in the City of Logan, says managing the enormous amount of data and information in existence around the world is a growing challenge for the industry.

"Information is so powerful, but if we don't get hold of what's out there soon, government and private enterprise will be forever chasing their tails," Meryl said.

"The future lies in how we manage information, data privacy and governance but there'll also be developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning that we'll need to work with and embrace."

Australian practices for records and information management lead the way globally, but Meryl says the industry is eager to develop more international standards and guidelines.

"At the InfoCon conference, 80 per cent of attendees were in private industry, including lawyers, insurance companies and banks, whereas in Australia, 80 per cent of RIMPA's members are government agencies," she said.

"But regardless, it's clear the interest in managing information properly through its life cycle to make informed decisions is shared throughout the industry.

“We visited the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation (in Detroit, where the conference was held) and even those artefacts are records.

“I also attended a presentation by the FBI who spoke about how they manage evidence and research information and records in their cases.”

Logan City Council was established in 1979 with paper-based records stored in five compactus units until disused water towers were converted to a records and document storage facility in the early 1990s, with temperature and humidity controls able to withstand heat of 4000 degrees for five hours.

The organisation’s first fax machine arrived in 1993.

Council began using digital records in 1999 and today more than 12 million documents are in the organisation’s electronic records and information management system.

Meryl’s contribution to advancing records and information management will continue in 2024 when she joins RIMPA Global’s board of directors for a two-year term.

“It’s not a career you chase when you’re at school,” she said.

“Most of us fall into it by chance but it is an amazing career path, and it’s becoming more interesting every day with a focus on data and information, and not just records.

“This is something RIMPA will address in our strategic planning over the coming years.”

**<caption> Logan City Council employee Meryl Bourke attended the 2023 International InfoCon Conference in the United States through an industry scholarship.**

**<caption> Meryl Bourke accepts her individual award at the RIMPA Global 2023 Awards.**

**<caption> Meryl Bourke at the 2023 ARMA International Conference with some of the ARMA board members.**

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