Community cultural heritage: National aspirations, local realities

Dr Sigrid McCausland has been a Lecturer in the School of Information Studies, Charles Sturt University since mid-2009. An archivist with a long career primarily in university archives and government archives, she also worked as Education Officer for the Australian Society of Archivists where she was involved in community outreach programs. She currently coordinates the records and archives management specialisations offered by the School.

Sigrid’s research focuses on advocacy for the cultural sector and access to cultural heritage, particularly archives, in the transition to the digital age. She has a strong interest in the relationship between cultural policy development and implementation by governments and the management of cultural heritage at the local level in Australia and other countries. Her professional experience and her research both inform her curiosity about the social and political contexts in which information organisations operate in contemporary society.

In 2011, the Australian Government invited submissions on a discussion paper for a new national cultural policy. Hundreds of responses were received from large and small cultural institutions, professional associations and individual citizens. Many urged the government to support its proposed new policy with sufficient funding to support the many organisations which care for Australia’s cultural collections. Unlike some other countries, Australia has no national digitisation plan for its cultural collections. And even without the financial stringencies affecting government spending today, it appears unlikely that the new cultural policy will provide the infrastructure and funding needed for the maintenance of local cultural heritage in local hands. At the local level, cultural collections are managed by an ageing paid and volunteer workforce, often without adequate recourse to continuing professional advice and support.

In this paper, Sigrid looks at the prospects for community cultural heritage in Australia in the current climate. She draws on comparisons with New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom to suggest that there are other models which require political commitment as well as adequate resources to ensure the continued viability of collections that are valued by communities at the local and national level.

**EVENT DETAILS**

Wednesday 19 September 2012  
12:00-1:00pm

School of Information Studies Seminar Room  
Building 05  
Charles Sturt University  
Wagga Campus  
VC Admin CA 720

**Bridgit SIS Seminar**  
**Password** <no password required>


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