

Title of paper

Recordmaking by design: Australian experiences with using appraisal to help governments make and keep good records

Bio

Adrian Cunningham has been doing archival work for almost 40 years in various Australian and international settings. He commenced his career in collecting archives, first at the State Library of New South Wales and later at the National Library of Australia. He also spent a year running the multi-national Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. More recently, he worked at the National Archives of Australia as Director, Recordkeeping Standards and Policy and at Queensland State Archives as Director, Digital Archives and Government Recordkeeping. He now works as a consultant and performs a range of pro bono responsibilities for the International Council on Archives, the Australian Society of Archivists and the ISO Committee on Records Management and Archives, TC46/SC11. He is a Fellow of the Australian Society of Archivists, a recipient of the Emmitt Leahy Award for Records Management and was recently inducted as a Fellow of the International Council on Archives.

Abstract

This paper will review the political context that drove changes in public recordkeeping laws and standards in different Australian jurisdictions from the 1990s onwards, most particularly the advent of legislative requirements for government agencies to **make** and keep full and accurate records. It explores the archival professional response to these developments over the past 25 years, including the adoption of 'records continuum' thinking and an ongoing reconceptualisation and reoperationalisation of appraisal. It will argue that the achievements of the Australian records profession in implementing new approaches to appraisal have been mixed. It will consider the lessons that can be learned from these experiences and what the profession internationally can do to help ensure that full and accurate records are indeed made and kept by public agencies.

Revised for readability

Political context drives change in public recordkeeping laws and standards, and in many Australian jurisdictions the advent of legislative record-making and recordkeeping requirements for government agencies from the 1990s onwards have prompted a professional response from archivists. The adoption of continuum thinking and an ongoing reconceptualization and re-operationalization of appraisal. The achievements in Australian records profession in implementing new approaches to appraisal are mixed, but ensuring that full and accurate records are indeed made and kept by public agencies should be an ongoing professional concern internationally.