

Response ID ANON-7DYF-9QVE-Y

Submitted to ANZSCO comprehensive review - consultation round 1
Submitted on 2023-04-27 22:49:56

Introduction

1 What is your first name?

Name:
Alice

2 What is your last name?

Name:
Cannon

3 What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) Inc

4 What is your position/title?

Position/title:
President

5 Which state are you located in (or country if overseas)?

ACT

Other country (please specify):

6 What is your email address?

Email:
president@aiccm.org.au

7 What is your phone number?

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

8 How did you find out about the Comprehensive review and update of ANZSCO?

Direct approach from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Other (please specify):

Focus area

9 Please select a focus area

Library and other information services

Occupations that are separately identified in ANZSCO

10 Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace that are not accurately described?

Details of occupations in your industry, business or workplace that are not accurately described:

AICCM would like to amend the definition for Occupation: 234911 Conservator.

Existing definition: Plans and organises the conservation of materials and objects in libraries, archives, museums, art galleries and other institutions.

New definition: Conservators investigate, document, treat, and prevent damage to material culture, in order to facilitate access for people to whom they hold significance - for example, through display, digitisation, research, and community programs. Conservators specialise in particular materials, formats, or applications. This occupation combines arts and science knowledge frameworks with applied tasks requiring fine motor skills. Conservation work may also be described as restoration or preservation.

Justification: The new definition addresses the interdisciplinary and 'hands-on' nature of much conservation work, and its collaborative nature. Additionally, as the existing definition implies conservators only work within cultural organisations, which is not the case (e.g. many work in private practice and/or carry out work for businesses or individuals), this element has been removed.

Specialisations:

AICCM would like to revise the specialisations listed, to better match the AICCM's Special Interest Groups, international industry frameworks, and the Australian employment market.

Conservation positions are more commonly defined by an area of material specialisation (e.g. Paintings) or activity (e.g. Exhibitions).

Increasing the number of available specialisations makes it more likely an individual will select a description that will be coded back to Conservator. This will help AICCM and associated organisations to develop a more accurate picture of the extent and nature of conservation employment and investment within Australia.

This data will be useful for advocacy campaigns, policy development, grant applications and the preparation of business plans - for example, by allowing comparison of the number of positions (by speciality) to the value or quantity of cultural heritage requiring conservation, or to gauge the availability of conservation expertise to the population by geographical location. There is also greater potential to show skills gaps and employment trends over time.

Remove Specialisation:

Art Conservator

Add Specialisations:

Conservator - Paintings

Conservator - Preventive conservation

Conservator - Exhibitions and/or loans

Conservator - Frames and/or gilded objects

Conservator - Textiles

Conservator - Objects

Conservator - Digital media

Conservator - Paper and/or photographs

Conservator - Film and/or audiovisual formats

Conservator - Natural sciences

Conservation scientist

Conservation manager

Conservation educator

Conservation assistant, officer, or technician

Tasks include [if space permits]:

Examination and documentation of objects, including condition surveys and reports

Recommending appropriate materials and environments for storage, display and other contexts

Researching, testing and applying treatments to stabilise, clean, repair, restore or activate objects

Conducting materials analysis and other tests to investigate and characterise material deterioration pathways, object authenticity, artist and construction techniques, and other material-based research questions

Format duplication or migration

Environmental analysis and monitoring to manage storage, display and transport environments

Construction of display supports and storage enclosures

Consultation with curators, custodians and community stakeholders to devise treatments and preservation strategies appropriate to their cultural context and access needs

Assessing and managing physical risks to cultural heritage objects and collections

Disaster response and recovery for cultural material affected by fire, flood, pests etc

11 Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace for which ANZSCO does not accurately reflect the skill level (1 to 5)?

Occupations which do not accurately reflect the skill level (1 to 5):

No change required - 'Conservator' already has the highest skill level assigned (Level 1), which is the most accurate available.

12 Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace which we should consider classifying under a different ANZSCO category (e.g. sub-major, minor or unit group)?

Occupations to classify under a different ANZSCO category:

Conservation is currently listed under unit 2349 'other natural and physical science professionals'. This still seems the most appropriate category in the existing ANZSCO classification system.

However, Conservation is by nature an interdisciplinary profession. For example, paintings conservation combines materials science, art history, and applied hand skills similar to those required by artists and craftspeople. From this perspective, the current category does not reflect the true nature of the expertise required.

Nor does it reflect how Conservation is (often) categorised in other systems. For example, many conservators employed in government organisations sit under State or Federal 'Arts' portfolios (e.g. libraries, galleries, archives, museums). The two existing conservation tertiary courses sit in the Faculty of Arts of their respective universities (though a previous iteration of the conservation degree at the University of Canberra was an 'Applied Science' qualification). The persistent designation of Conservation as 'Arts' is not necessarily one that AICCM itself agrees with, but nevertheless it represents our current political and economic reality. However, ANZSCO category '21 Arts and Media Professionals' is clearly oriented towards the creative arts rather than other professions associated with the broader 'Arts' sector, so moving 'Conservator' here wouldn't be appropriate.

If this review provides an opportunity to review the structure itself, AICCM would argue for a new Professional Classification incorporating other 'applied' occupations within the cultural and heritage sector - 'Cultural Professionals', perhaps - particularly where they are concerned with material culture or heritage ('things').

The existing structure fractures occupations who a) work closely together; b) have common policy and advocacy interests; and c) comprise a culturally and economically significant sector of society. Government decisions regarding 'Arts' funding (and associated policy, such as the new Federal Cultural Policy), typically have major implications for conservators (234 Natural and Physical Science Professionals), archaeologists, heritage consultants, and historians (272 Social and Welfare Professionals), curators and museum registrars, and a significant subset of archivists and librarians (all 224 Information and Organisation Professions), and heritage architects (232 Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors), whether in public or private employment.

The existing ANZSCO structure also obscures Conservation positions that have a more obvious high-level ANZSCO category - for example, conservators who have moved into management (e.g. the manager of a Conservation department) and university-based research or teaching positions (e.g. to teach Paintings Conservation, or to conduct materials science research) - even though these positions require the incumbent to have a high level Conservation training and experience. These positions effectively become invisible to AICCM. This is no doubt the same for many occupations, but for a small profession it further reduces the apparent number of people employed in Conservation and the number of positions requiring this expertise. This in turn reduces our ability to identify skills gaps, to understand the job market, and to advocate successfully.

(As an aside - the term 'Professional' might need review in itself, as it could be interpreted to imply all the other major categories are not professional - e.g. amateur, unskilled etc).

Occupations not separately identified in ANZSCO

13 Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace that should be separately identified with a unique code?

Occupations that should be separately identified:

N/A. However, when the conservation profession is larger, it may become useful to separate the specialisations that deal with physical objects (which typically involve more hands-on treatment) from specialisations that deal with digital formats, materials analysis or the environmental sciences, as there are marked differences in the specific skill sets required.

For example, a digital preservation specialist requires technical expertise and skills more closely associated with Information Technology specialists, though with underlying cultural heritage and preservation ethical and contextual frameworks.

14 Are there occupations that are emerging, or that you anticipate will emerge, in the next 5 to 10 years in your industry, business or workplace?

Occupations that are emerging:

N/A. However, jobs relating to digital preservation exist in a number of related Occupations (e.g. Librarianship, Records Management, etc as well as Conservation), with significant potential for overlap. For now the number of positions that sit clearly within Conservation contexts appear to be small (less than 50), so including the new specialization 'Conservator - digital media' will help gauge growth in this area. This may change in future years as cultural heritage becomes increasingly digital.

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) are also likely to comment on this growing specialist area.

Other information

15 Is there any other information to help support your submission?

Other information to support submission:

N/A

16 Please provide information on any other issues in relation to ANZSCO that have not already been covered in this survey.

Any other issues not already covered:

N/A. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute!