



Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield
Minister for the Arts
PO Box 6100
Senate, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Fifield

I am writing to you as Chair of the Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT), representing practicing and professional historians across NSW and the ACT, regarding the recently announced budget cuts to Commonwealth cultural institutions.

Institutions such as the National Library of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, the National Museum of Australia, the Museum of Australian Democracy, as well as the National Portrait Gallery and National Gallery of Australia are cornerstones to the telling of Australian stories and understandings of our history. They are vital to our ongoing connections to our past and the lessons we can take from that as a nation.

Sustained budget cuts to these institutions now threaten the very services that so many people rely on them to provide. Of particular concern is the National Library of Australia's Trove program, whereby newspapers, books, journals, diaries, pictures, maps and other primary sources from the NLA and other collecting institutions across Australia have been digitised and offered through one platform to historians and researchers, both professional and amateur alike.

Trove has transformed the way historians approach Australian historical research and allowed for previously unimaginable discoveries to be made across every topic of Australian history. Trove is a world leading resource and the envy of researchers and historians from around the globe. It is a community asset, with thousands of volunteers assisting in corrections of text and transcribing of articles to make it accessible to all.

The funding issues the Library face mean the aggregation of content into Trove from other institutions will cease (unless fully funded by those institutions), causing a stagnation in the service. Its strength is in its continual aggregation of new material and ability to update. The cuts proposed will undermine its ability to do this and ultimately reduce its usefulness.

The Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT join other professional and community organisations in requesting the Commonwealth reconsider these cuts. While their contribution to overall budgetary savings will be small, their impact on these institutions and our ability to understand our nation's history will be gravely felt.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Mark Dunn
Chair
Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT