



GPO Box 2437
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

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This submission is made on behalf of the Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT).

About us

The Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) represents 109 professionally accredited historians practising in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Professional historians are trained to research and present history in a variety of formats. They work in museums, government departments, universities, schools, private firms and as freelance writers. They research an array of subjects, from community and company histories to all forms of heritage work. They undertake oral history projects and curate museums. Their work is published in a variety of formats such as books, information pamphlets, exhibitions, walking tour apps, or websites. There is also a range of work undertaken by historians that does not end up published, for example a variety of reports and advice; films and documentaries; research for Native Title claims, mining leases and other litigation, and as expert witnesses.

The Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) is committed to inculcating an ethos of high standards of professional and ethical practices among professional historians. We advocate for historical perspectives in public debates and in government, and the keeping and protection of historic places for future generations.

Neglect of the National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia is the repository of all records of the commonwealth government since Federation. Professional Historians access these records on a daily basis to provide documentary evidence for a broad range of commercial and community projects. Some members are holding tickets for items that date back a decade, usually long after the project concerned is complete.



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The National Archives collection is continually growing, often adding shelf kilometres of records annually. Reduced funding created by so-called 'efficiency dividends' is counter-productive to maintaining a growing collection. It is not possible to provide protection for more documents every year with less money,

Maintaining, recording, conserving, and making archives accessible takes time, patience and professional expertise, just like historical research. Meticulousness, care and patience is required in historical research as it is in maintaining archives. This takes time and money. We urge the ministers, members of parliament and senators to support the National Archives of Australia with funds commensurate with the needs of this important institution.

Large sums have been set aside for major works to the Australian War Memorial. The Australian War Memorial only holds a tiny part of the records regarding Australia's participation in different conflicts. The National Archives of Australia holds the vast bulk of those records, extending across all states but principally in the repositories at Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney. The State-based reading rooms are critically important for delivery of service for historical research. These places enabled historians to visit and access local records and the expertise of National Archives of Australia archivists.

As you will note, attention has been drawn in news reports to the deteriorating state of the photographic and film collection held by the National Archives and the urgent need for conservation and digitisation. These collections cannot wait until the next funding round to be addressed. PHA (NSW & ACT) urges you to act now.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our submission.

Contact Person

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