

SUBMISSION TO NAA

NAA PERTH

May I open my submission to state that the NAA Perth performs a vital and important role in disseminating Commonwealth history, not just history from the Eastern States. The NAA staff are obliging and endeavour to assist all researchers in finding information within the budgetary constraints. In order to present a balanced and informed history it is important to keep records in Western Australia for local historians and the community.

As an academic historian and the author of several books I have used the NAA extensively in my research. My research has largely focused on Western Australian history and I see the presence of the NAA in Perth as vital to being able to conduct my work. Few people research Western Australian history, so to keep a repository of Western Australian records in Perth is vitally important for the nation's history which does not just mean the history of the Eastern States.

Local NAA staff understand Western Australia's vastness and the relevance of items in the collection, which makes it even more important to have a local presence.

ACCESS TO RECORDS:

Most recently I have had to fly to Canberra, Melbourne and soon Sydney and have had to request files from these repositories. I have to request any file 90 days in advance – and that means 90 working days, which is often not possible when I am trying to co-ordinate family commitments as well as research commitments. As an historian from Western Australia it is costly to fly interstate, stay in an hotel and work in the archives – although when the cost of an 'average' file is over \$200 to photocopy it is necessary. I have booked several files in Sydney, but because I have only requested 90 days – not 90 working days I may not get access to all of the material required. This requirement where no consideration is given to interstate researchers militates against my ability to conduct my research. I would ask that the NAA in all states makes some consideration to interstate historians and tries to have records available with reasonable notice.

COST OF COPYING A FILE:

When I have had to request a file to be copied I have been unable to get an assessment of the size or relevance of the file – with one exception, an employee in Sydney obligingly looked at the file quickly to tell me how many pages and some detail of the contents. Not only was useful, it saved me several hundred dollars. I would like all NAA staff in other jurisdictions to assist researchers in this way.

Dr Criena Fitzgerald.

June 2019