



ABN 12 234 568 600

HISTORY QUEENSLAND INC.

ABN 12 234 568 600

Patron Mr W (Bill) Kitson

**PO Box 399
Mt Gravatt Qld 4122**

<http://www.historyqueensland.org.au/>

28 June 2019

Mr David Tune AO PSM
Independent Reviewer
c/- Tune Review Secretariat
National Archives of Australia
Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600

Dear Mr Tune

History Queensland Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation established on 15 July 1995 and run entirely by volunteers. The organisation was formed as a state-wide umbrella organisation to encourage liaison and co-operation between local and family history societies, to promote greater awareness of local and family history and to encourage all levels of government to recognise the importance of local and family history.

Among the many ways we help family and local history groups throughout Queensland, we have two main roles – to provide support and advice for interested groups and individuals wishing to form a regional or local society or improve the services of existing societies, and to provide unified representation to government and other relevant bodies on matters of concern to members.

In conjunction with our aim of promoting and developing opportunities for people to participate in family history, local history, genealogical, heraldic and small museum activities we work with government agencies in Queensland to ensure access to records which will assist in these pursuits. We are active members in the Consultation forum at the NAA Brisbane, and the Consultation Forum with the State Archives.

We have been very grateful for all the work undertaken by the NAA to digitise the AIF dossiers as part of the centenary of the First World War. These dossiers provide a wealth of information for family and local historians. That they are freely and readily available is a huge bonus for historians and is much appreciated.

We understand that costs and time constraints is very much a factor in which records are prioritised and that significant quantities of records can only be digitised when government funding is provided. We were much encouraged

by the promise during the election of funding for digitisation of the World War Two records and sincerely hope this funding is provided for this important task and that further funding in the years ahead will ensure the task is undertaken in a reasonable time frame.

As the custodian of so many of our national records, including the immigration records, naturalisations, military records and so much more, we appreciate all the NAA has done to date to make such records available for research by historians. The information gleaned from these official records not only throws light on individual family members but gives researchers a better understanding of the times in which these records were established and Australia's place in history and our national identity.

In reality so few of the members who make up our member organisations will have the opportunity to visit the NAA offices in Canberra, or even one of the regional offices, to actually look at the records held.

We strongly support the ongoing digitisation of the NAA's records. It is understood that the legislation regarding the role and responsibility of the NAA does not cover the digitisation of its records. In the digital world of the 21st century this should be a very important, indeed vital, part of the tasks undertaken by the holder of our national records. Digitisation is a time-consuming task which requires not only adequate and ongoing funding but also adequate staffing levels to ensure the process is undertaken and completed in a timely, methodical manner. A review of the access to such records and the costs to individuals should also be part of the review.

History Queensland understands that funding restrictions make complete digitisation and free access to many record sets prohibitive. However we do appreciate the option given by the NAA for digitisation of individual records through a user pays system, thus increasing access. The recent inclusion of a fourth price point for such digitisation is welcomed and makes records more affordable. We appreciate the feedback from stakeholders such as the state consultation forums was heard from NAA.

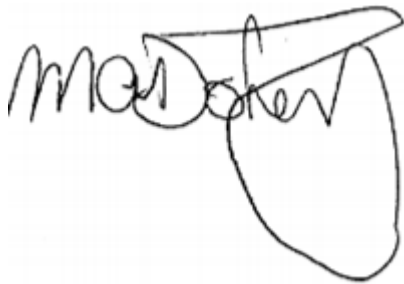
Crowd-sourcing projects such as ArchIVE - <http://transcribe.naa.gov.au/> which uses individuals online to create item level data about NAA holdings from original list of records received from agencies is an ideal way to help users to discover more records. Such projects engage the public and are an efficient way to improve the understanding by the public of what records are held by NAA. The work done by volunteers online should increase access to those records for everyone. I understand these records date back to the 1950s and include hand-written lists that are difficult to read.

The Brisbane office of NAA has recently facilitated an innovative self-digitisation pilot which has been most welcome and is already producing impressive results. Members of the Queensland Consultation Forum (of which History Queensland is a member) look forward to the final results of this pilot in the hope that this self-digitalising process becomes an agreed procedure in all states. Projects such as this will significantly increase access to records. This should be at minimal cost but would allow individual researchers to prioritise records of interest.

We strongly support the ongoing digitisation of the NAA's records. It is understood that the legislation regarding the role and responsibility of the NAA does not cover the digitisation of its records, having been established pre-digitisation. In the digital world of the 21st century this should be a very important, indeed vital, part of the tasks undertaken by the holder of our national records. Digitisation is a time-consuming task which requires not only adequate and ongoing funding but also adequate staffing levels to ensure the process is undertaken and completed in a timely, methodical manner. A review of the access to such records and the costs to individuals should also be part of the review.

The importance of the role of the National Archives of Australia and the huge store of official records it cares for cannot be under-estimated and it is absolutely imperative that its work continue with proper resourcing (both financial and staffing) to enable it to share those records with family and local historians, academics and others interested in preserving the identity of not just individuals but of the Australia as a nation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Doherty'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Margaret Doherty
President
History Queensland Inc.