

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my value and appreciation of the National Archive of Australia in light of the recent governmental review into its funding and place in the digital age. As a history student currently writing an honours thesis, the archive has been an invaluable resource in my research and has made my learning much richer, serving to display and demonstrate history more vividly than could be possible otherwise. However, I do not believe the archive's value is limited to academia.

My particular focus is memory studies, and I understand the integral role archives play in safeguarding a nation's history. History is of invaluable importance to a people's sense of self, their values, and their vision of the future. Having spent some time in France during my studies, I was particularly impressed with the value they gave their institutions that were seen to protect French heritage, archives included. This value was not only intangible appreciation, but was expressed materially, in the form of funding and support. It is a government's job to do the best for the people for whom it works, and part of that is encouraging a sense and value of history and heritage. This cannot be done with mere words. Money and material support is needed.

In my work as a research assistant, I learned that the NAA can help even in the most unexpected circumstances. I was helping to develop a university course on the Holocaust, and was surprised to find that the NAA provided a great insight to the Australian perspective on an event that took place on the other side of the world. Without the NAA, I'm sure much would be lost concerning the perspective of those who found this country to be a safe haven in times of danger. We would also lose evidence of groups who stood up against inaction or injustice, as William Cooper did on behalf of indigenous Australians against Nazi Germany's treatment of Jewish people.

In a time of turbulence, when so many pieces of culture, heritage, and history throughout the world are being lost or threatened, we cannot believe that our nation is immune and do nothing to protect our own past and present. Increased funding for the NAA, to keep it functioning across the nation and to allow it to change and adapt to our changing methods of information storage and consumption is essential. I cannot express enough how imperative it is that the government ensures this can happen.

Best,  
Grace Gardiner