

I'm a librarian working in a history library in Melbourne. I'm writing a submission to this review, because I am deeply concerned about the lack of funding to the NAA. As a librarian who works in the history field, especially local history, I've seen first-hand how important the primary sources held at the NAA are to a wide variety of people. I also understand the issues of the obsolescence of many forms of recording material and the need to preserve and provide access to the records that shape Australia's history and thus its future.

The enduring role of the National Archives in the protection, preservation and use of Commonwealth information;

For me and for many of the people I help, this is the key role of the NAA, by preserving a true cross section of commonwealth information the NAA is creating the reality of the Australian consciousness. This is a complex task that requires adequate funding, staff and physical premises. Also, as the NAA is the only federal memory institution that has branches across the country, it makes the country's memory accessible on a national level.

How the National Archives might best perform this role;

Through the preservation, digitisation (for access and preservation), provision of access, cataloguing and categorising and accessioning of records. And working with government departments to ensure the correct records that cover all aspects of Commonwealth work are preserved and made accessible. The records that the NAA holds covers an extraordinary array of Australian society, without the NAA or with the NAA running on reduced funding the memory of Australia is at risk.

What powers, functions, resources, and legislative and governance frameworks the National Archives needs to effectively and efficiently undertake this role in the digital age.

There needs to continue to be key legislative frameworks that specify the records that the NAA collects and protects the NAA as an independent body. The NAA needs sufficient funding to have the resources and the staff to ensure that records are preserved in the face of obsolescence and are made accessible to those who need them: from journalists, researchers, family historians, politicians, readers, writers, planners, architects, professional historians and just Australians from all walks of life. These are the records that are crucial to the development of Australian Identity into the future and as we move into more born digital material the NAA needs the resources to be on the front foot to collect Commonwealth records before they are lost.