



NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Our reference: R298902026

27 March 2026

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for the Arts
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Delivered: dlo.burke@mo.arts.gov.au

Dear Minister

National Archives of Australia – Statement of Intent 2025-26

Thank you for your letter of 4 November 2025 setting out your expectations for National Archives of Australia (National Archives). This Statement of Intent outlines how those expectations will be met, including through the delivery of *Strategy 2025–2030: Evolving National Archives* and other key commitments and activities.

National Archives occupies a unique position among Australia’s cultural institutions. It is both the custodian of the national archival collection and the Commonwealth’s lead authority for information management policy and practice. Its work ensures that Australian Government information of enduring significance is secured, preserved and accessible for current and future generations, strengthening trust in democracy and supporting transparency and accountability.

National Archives will continue to support the National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, and welcomes the government’s continued commitment to modernising the *Archives Act 1983*. The significant funding commitment from the government has supported the digitisation of at-risk records, an uplift in digital storage capability and the servicing of public-facing spaces nationally.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Froude'.

Simon Froude
Director-General

Copied to: Ms Amanda Heyworth, Chair, National Archives of Australia Advisory Council



National Archives of Australia – Statement of Intent 2025-26

National Archives of Australia (National Archives) will deliver on the expectations outlined in the Minister's Statement of Expectations through an integrated approach that combines the measurable outcomes of our Corporate Plan with the long-term transformation set out in our *Strategy 2025–2030: Evolving National Archives*. We are committed to meeting immediate priorities while building capability and resilience for the future.

Strategic focus

In the year ahead, our priority is the implementation of *Evolving National Archives*, supported by the continued embedding of the 5 pillars of *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place* (*Revive*).

We will respond to the Minister's expectations by advancing digital transformation, strengthening legislative foundations, managing our growing and evolving collection, expanding access to the national archival collection and leading best practice in information management across government.

Supporting *Revive* and modernising the *Archives Act 1983*

National Archives will continue to embed all 5 pillars of *Revive* across our operations, ensuring they remain central to planning and delivery alongside working closely with other Australian Government agencies to further the aims of the policy. We will continue to engage in and support the review of *Revive* and the development of a new national cultural policy.

In addition, we will accelerate work to support the modernisation of the *Archives Act 1983*, creating a contemporary legislative framework that enables National Archives to manage, preserve and provide access to records in ways that reflect the digital age.

First Nations first

National Archives recognises the vital role of archival records in truth-telling and reconciliation. For First Nations communities, the national archival collection holds essential information about family, Country and culture – much of it created during times of deep injustice. In line with *Revive*'s First Nations First pillar, we will provide culturally safe pathways to accessing records. We will also continue to improve descriptions for First Nations records through close consultation with community.

Our Bringing Them Home Name Index remains a key resource for First Nations people seeking information about themselves, their Country and their history. We will continue engaging with communities nationwide to support family history research and raise awareness of our services. We will continue to support the Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme and the Victorian Stolen Generations Reparations Package with dedicated staff in the Northern Territory and Victoria respectively. National Archives will continue to engage and partner with the Healing Foundation, both directly and in our work with the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities, to identify and remove barriers to improve access to records of Stolen Generations.

To support our First Nations outcomes, National Archives is also undertaking an internal cultural capability uplift. This capability training program will deepen our employees' understanding of First Nations history, culture and sensitivities, ensure that staff act in alignment with First Nations cultural practices when handling, storing and providing access to First Nations records, and engaging with First Nations communities.

Access and engagement

Comprising more than 54 million items, the national archival collection is a vital public resource. Access remains a core legislative responsibility, as access to historical records of government

actions and decisions strengthens trust in Australia's democratic institutions and builds social capital. The national archival collection holds millions of individual stories that document the development of Australia's nationhood. From these stories come knowledge, and from knowledge comes understanding and respect. National Archives will continue to be an active contributor to social cohesion by expanding its reach and broadening its stakeholder base to share these stories with sectors of the community who in the past, have not actively engaged with the national archival collection.

National Archives is a vital part of the infrastructure that makes cultural memory possible. Through our Corporate Plan, we set clear targets for reference services, digitisation-on-demand and access decisions to prioritise meeting our legislative responsibilities. In *Evolving National Archives* we focus on audience insight and co-design to create enriched engagement experiences. Together, these efforts will improve processes that facilitate access, as well as ensure people can connect with their stories through diverse onsite, offsite and digital programs.

These engagements are not only focused on Australians but people from all countries. We will continue to focus our efforts in the Pacific, particularly providing support to Papua New Guinea. We also work collaboratively with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to facilitate visits by high-profile international delegations with links to the national archival collection. Through these engagements, we reinforce our role as a leading archive committed to sharing information and expertise with others.

We are investing significantly to uplift our ability to manage, preserve and provide meaningful access to an increasingly digital collection. This is achieved through data storage upgrades, transforming to a more resilient and secure IT infrastructure, and leveraging cloud-based technologies for improved data and information management. The implementation of these solutions marks a pivotal chapter in the National Archives' journey towards a more digitally empowered future.

Information management leadership and collaboration

We will continue to provide strong leadership in information management and archival practice, nationally and internationally. National Archives will continue its ongoing program of engagement with agencies to assist them strengthen their information management practices.

National Archives is reviewing its agency engagement and information management support models to uplift information management maturity and capability across government.

We have extended the *Building trust in the public record*, to December 2028 to provide continuity, certainty and opportunity for further information management improvement by Australian Government agencies. Alongside this, we are reviewing the Check-up survey to ensure it meets the current and future needs of National Archives and Australian Government agencies.

National Archives also commits to active participation in leadership forums and partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. We are an active member of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA). A National Archives employee undertakes the position of treasurer and manages finances, membership and communications for PARBICA, as well as supports the biennial conference. We also support audiovisual preservation in the Asia-Pacific region via the Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association and participation in a UNESCO workshop on preserving glass plate collections.

We collaborate with other National Collecting Institutions and Australian Government agencies. These relationships and activities strengthen Australia's cultural infrastructure and promote global best practice.

Diversity, inclusion and sustainability

We are committed to creating an inclusive workplace and delivering equitable access to services. Our Inclusion Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plan will guide improvements in workforce

representation and accessibility. The plan sets out a clear framework to remove barriers for people with disability, ensure our digital and physical environments are universally accessible, foster an inclusive workplace culture that attracts, supports and retains employees with disability, and deliver programs and experiences that meet diverse needs, including initiatives such as quiet hours and accessible formats.

Environmental sustainability remains a priority in line with the government's net zero target. This is supported by our ongoing digital-first transformation, segregated waste management system and activities to modernise building infrastructure. National Archives is maximising energy efficiency through upgrade of ageing plant and equipment and purchase of renewable electricity in line with government coordinated procurement arrangements.

Financial sustainability and governance

We will continue to manage the government's funding commitment responsibly, prioritising staffing, suppliers and asset replacement by need. To that end, we are developing a 4-year budget strategy to achieve financial sustainability. The financial reporting and performance measures in the Corporate Plan will ensure transparency, while *Evolving National Archives* provides the discipline to align resources with organisational priorities.

We will continue to pursue own-source revenue opportunities through philanthropic and private sector engagement. National Archives maintains appropriate governance arrangements for our organisation, the Advisory Council and staff. We have signed a new digitisation partnership agreement with Ancestry.com to digitise records on site at National Archives, which will enable greater digital access to the national archival collection.

Following a generous donation from a philanthropist in 2021, which enabled the preservation and digitisation of over 368,500 photographic portraits from Second World War service files, a further donation was received to support the preservation and access to nationally significant collections, including records of displaced persons arriving in Australia and Royal Australian Navy ships lost at sea. The availability of these personal records to Australians builds a sense of national belonging through their connections to the past, as we each tell our unique story.

Delivering through an integrated framework

National Archives' Corporate Plan provides measurable outcomes for the next 4 years, while *Evolving National Archives* sets the direction for the next 5 years and beyond. Together, they ensure that every initiative—whether uplifting agency capability, digitising at-risk records or improving public access – is connected to a clear purpose: to preserve the past, understand the present and inspire the future.

