

**PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Federal Member for Bradfield
Minister for Communications,
Urban Infrastructure,
Cities & the Arts

MS21-002325

The Hon Dr Brett Mason
Chair
Council of the National Library of Australia
Parkes Place
Parkes ACT 2600

Dear Dr ~~Mason~~ ^{Brett}

I am writing to outline my expectations for the National Library of Australia (the Library) for the 2021-22 financial year.

Before doing this, I wish to acknowledge the work of the Library in 2020-21, and its success in navigating the challenges related to COVID-19 lockdowns, restrictions and border closures.

Cultural and creative content has proven to be vitally important in maintaining the wellbeing of people and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the Library for continuing to provide Australian audiences with meaningful opportunities to access and engage with its collections and those of partner organisations both in-person, whenever that was possible, and online through Trove.

The Government understands the significant ongoing impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on Australia, and in particular the arts and cultural sector, and the business activities of our National Collecting Institutions. In response, the Government has provided substantial additional funding to the arts sector over the course of the pandemic, including specific funding relief to the Library. Government policy is now focussed on maximising our economic, social and cultural recovery as vaccination targets are reached and exceeded across the country.

The Library's continued successes despite the impact of COVID-19 are due to strong leadership from the Council and senior management. Both should continue to provide the foundations for a strong and productive institution through clear leadership and pursue available opportunities to support the following strategic government priorities in 2021-22:

- provide leadership and foster collaboration within national and international library sectors as they recover from the effects of COVID-19;
- contribute to Australian economic and cultural activity as restrictions ease, institutions reopen to the public and tourism resumes;
- support recovery in regional, remote and outer metropolitan areas through collection touring, exhibitions, and outreach activities;
- promote inclusion, diversity and social cohesion by providing greater opportunities for all Australians to access arts and culture, including through digital channels;
- continue to foster appreciation and understanding of Indigenous arts, culture and knowledge systems, and contribute to a professional, viable and ethical Indigenous cultural sector;
- engage in activities to enrich arts and cultural education at all levels; and
- maintain and strengthen the financial sustainability of the Library by increasing own-source revenue, philanthropy and private-sector support.

I am aware that the Library is already progressing many of these areas and has included them as part of its 2021-22 Corporate Plan. That Plan includes four strategic pillars: Collect; Connect; Collaborate; and Capability to articulate the Library's vision to connect all Australians with national collections, enriching our understanding about who we are and our place in the world.

As you will be aware, the Office for the Arts is undertaking work to review the long-term financial sustainability needs of each of the National Collecting Institutions ahead of the 2022-23 Budget. In 2022 the Government will also be considering further opportunities for National Collecting Institutions, both within and outside the portfolio, to share physical and digital storage, and digital access infrastructure.

I expect the Library will continue to work cooperatively with the Office for the Arts and other portfolio agencies, especially the other National Collecting Institutions, in contributing to the Government's policy priorities and to achieve cost efficiencies through collaboration wherever opportunities can be leveraged. I also ask that you alert me and the Office for the Arts of any significant events or developments related to the Library's activities and functions.

This Statement of Expectations and your corresponding Statement of Intent form an important component of the Library's governance framework. As such, I anticipate both documents will be made publicly available.

I have written to other arts portfolio agencies in similar terms and have copied this letter to the Library's Director-General, Dr Marie-Louise Ayres.

I wish the Library every success in meeting its objectives in 2021-22.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Fletcher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Fletcher

21/11/2021