

2 October 2020

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The Hon Paul Fletcher MP  
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts  
Parliament House ACT 2600

Dear Minister

**Statement of Intent 2020-21 - National Library of Australia**

Thank you for your letter of 28 August 2020, setting out your expectations for the National Library of Australia in 2020-21. The Library is pleased to respond with this Statement of Intent.

As you know from our Corporate Plan - our principal planning document - the Library's primary purpose is to collect documentary resources relating to Australia and its people so that the Australian community - now and in the future - can discover, learn and create new knowledge to support industry, health, education, communications, regions and the arts throughout Australia.

We express this mission across four priorities:

Collect - We collect today what will be important tomorrow

Connect - We connect with communities and connect communities with their national collections

Collaborate - We collaborate with others to maximise the national impact of cultural collections.

Capability - We build capability to maximise return on the nation's investment in the Library.

While the Library's mission has long been to collect, connect and collaborate, the ways in which we have carried out that mission have changed dramatically. The digital era has seen creative and research practices, knowledge production and community expectations fundamentally reshaped through the opportunities that new technologies offer.

The Library has responded to and anticipated these changes, building an astounding collection, developing world-leading digital platforms, connecting with more Australians than ever before, and collaborating with other agencies to develop digital culture infrastructure on which the nation relies. We are committed to continuing this proud record of service to the Australian people. We thank you for your recognition of the impact of these activities, and especially for your recognition that the Library's prioritisation of digital services means that we have been able to serve the Australian people in their homes across the country, during a time of great community disruption.

Thank you for the strategic priorities you have asked the Library to focus on in 2020-21. In pursuing these priorities, the Library intends to:

***Provide national leadership and foster collegiality within the library sector to assist with its recovery from COVID-19***

The Library will continue to play a leadership role in Australia's library and broader Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector, including through National and State Libraries Australia, by maintaining and enhancing national infrastructure that underpins the work of cultural institutions large and small, across every part of Australia, and at every level of government. The Library led the way in swiftly pivoting its focus to digital delivery and online engagement and played a key role in ensuring the public could access a broad range of digital content and services while public libraries were physically closed.

***Contribute to economic activity and recovery as social restrictions ease, particularly in regional centres, through touring and/or other outreach activities***

The Library creates value for the whole of Australia by providing onsite and digital services that support research, lifelong learning, creativity, knowledge production, and cultural enrichment. Digital content provided via Trove powers increasing investment by local communities in regional heritage activities, and adds the rich content needed by creators across the book, audio-visual, performing arts, heritage and – most recently – fashion industries. Combining local entrepreneurship with high quality heritage content from a trusted source means that Australia's rich and diverse stories can be told by regional communities, as many Australians re-engage with their own 'backyard' through regional tourism. Trove's new Collection Features support members to curate digital mini-exhibitions, and to reach a very large audience with an invitation to explore the cultural wealth held in regional institutions.

Connecting our communities, in our regions and our cities, with their national collections is therefore a key priority. The Library will continue its digital outreach programs to extend national reach and engagement, in particular to regional areas, to increase the number and diversity of Australians interacting with and benefiting from the Library's collections.

The Government's Modernisation funding has been invested in the Library's online platform, Trove. The refreshed Trove delivered in June 2020 modernised the platform, ensuring an enhanced user experience, and expanding the discovery of digital materials.

Our Trove 2030 Collaborative Strategy will guide our work with partners to provide digital access to Australian collections for metropolitan, regional and remote communities. Complementing this work, a Digital Access to Collections Strategy is being developed to guide digitisation priorities to serve the broadest possible cross-section of Australian society.

The Library also continues to develop its digital offering by live streaming adult learning webinars, book launches and conversations, winning a strong regional audience for this rich cultural content.

***Focus on how the Library's activities can further encourage social cohesion and foster diversity and inclusion***

The Library is building a collection for Australians that represents the full cultural diversity of the Australian community. As set out in its 2020-21 Corporate Plan, the Library will work to increase and improve the representation of Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the collection, through consultative approaches to acquisition and description. The Library will continue to collect Australian publications, pictures, manuscripts and oral histories to enliven the national story with unique voices and viewpoints. We have and will continue to build strong collections around the events of 2020, including collecting websites and oral histories around the impacts of bushfires and the pandemic. We know that our digital collections on the 'Spanish' Flu of 1917-18 have been heavily used to explore how Australia coped with that shock, and to provide a sense of hope that our nation has the cultural resilience to recover from the setbacks of this year.

Philanthropically funded Fellowships and Scholarships will continue to support scholars to work closely with the Library's collection to research and build on existing stories to inform and shape the nation's identity. Their stories will be shared via a live streamed lecture series to reach audiences across the globe through the Library's social media networks. The 2020 Fellows will explore a diverse range of topics covering Indigenous history and culture, literature, music, art, photography, the Asia and Pacific region and Australian history.

The Library will also actively expand engagement with linguistically and culturally diverse communities through delivery of high-quality learning experiences and outreach programs, via a wide range of platforms and delivery mechanisms, for Australians of all ages.

***Continue to champion and showcase our Indigenous cultures for the education, enrichment and benefit of all Australians***

In our redevelopment of Trove, we focused on making Trove more welcoming for Australia's First Nations peoples, aware that Trove is rich in resources that can be used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to tell their own stories, and to enrich community language and culture. We are delighted that the Trove First Nations portal has proven extremely popular since launch, and is useful to both Indigenous Australians, and those wishing to explore Australia's rich Indigenous cultures.

As an organisation, we continue our reconciliation journey through our Reconciliation Action Plan. In 2020-21, all staff at the Library will complete intensive cultural awareness training (the Core package developed by AIATSIS). More than 1700 staff across all members of National and State Libraries Australia are completing this training, reinforcing our commitment to serving First Nations communities, and to facilitating learning by all Australians.

***Maintain the Library's financial sustainability, including through exploring opportunities to further grow private sector support and increase own-source revenue.***

The Library is building a significant and sustainable philanthropic revenue stream to digitise the most important, impactful and unique areas of its collection, and to make them accessible through Trove. A new fundraising strategy was implemented in 2019-20, leveraging your Government's \$10 million seed funding over four years announced in the 2019 Federal Budget.

Our Director of Philanthropy is now leading the Library's Treasured Voices Campaign which, as you know, aims to inspire philanthropic support and raise \$30 million in private funding over ten years. We have continued to secure substantial gifts under the campaign and are well on track, with more than \$4 million raised to date.

The Library's successful partnership program has seen Commonwealth, State and local organisations fund digitisation and delivery via Trove of a broad array of publications, harnessing economies of scale to achieve shared national aims. Your Government's provision of \$8m over 2 years to support Trove will help this partnership to thrive.

In alignment with your urging, the Library is working cooperatively with the other National Collecting Institutions, and the Office for the Arts on their scoping study on shared storage facilities, coordinated analysis of strategic asset management plans, and Work Health and Safety audit of National Collecting Institutions facilities. The Library is grateful for your Government's provision of \$8m over several years to assist with our short-term collection storage needs, and to maintain our beautiful heritage building.

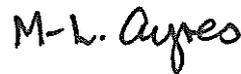
Last, Council thanks the Government for the recently announced \$5.4m funding in 2020-21 to assist the Library with the consequences of reduced revenue flows arising from COVID. This is most welcome, and will be deployed across all four of the Library's priority areas.

You can have every confidence that the National Library of Australia continues as a leader in the national and international library community, and as a truly National Library without geographical, economic or other boundaries, proudly connecting Australians with their stories.

Yours sincerely



The Honourable Dr Brett Mason  
Chair, National Library of Australia Council



Dr Marie-Louise Ayres  
Director-General, National Library of Australia