



22 January 2021  
The Hon Paul Fletcher MP  
Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
PO Box 6022  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: [Minister@Communications.gov.au](mailto:Minister@Communications.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

## **National Film and Sound Archive of Australia – Statement of Intent 2020-21**

Thank you for your letter dated 27 August 2020 outlining your expectations for the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) for 2020-21.

The NFSA Board and Executive appreciate your ongoing support, in particular your assistance during COVID-19, and the additional funding commitment which allows the NFSA to undertake large-scale digitisation of its at-risk audio and video magnetic tape in time to meet *Deadline 2025* and to establish the National Centre for Excellence in Audiovisual Heritage. The NFSA continues to collect, preserve and share Australia's national audiovisual heritage and to make it available to audiences worldwide for enjoyment, learning, insight and creativity.

On behalf of the NFSA Board, I am pleased to respond to your Statement of Expectations with our Statement of Intent.

### **NFSA vision and strategic priorities**

The NFSA's strategic vision has set the path for the NFSA to remain relevant and ensure it is equipped to respond to the challenges of the current environment as well as to deliver on priorities outlined in the Statement of Expectations. As Australia's only national audiovisual archive, the NFSA is uniquely placed to be a leader in the collection, preservation, curation and sharing of audiovisual heritage.

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The NFSA's vision is to be Australia's 'living' archive – relevant, engaging and accessible to the world. We envision the NFSA to be smart, connected and open in order to have maximum impact and relevance in society. Our vision is supported by a firm belief that the future of audiovisual archives is digital.

To ensure that we remain at the forefront of digital culture and that we continue to evolve along with the creators and users of Australia's audiovisual heritage, we have set out the following priorities in our Corporate Plan 2020-21 to 2023-24:

- Digitise the national audiovisual collection
- Establish the National Centre for Excellence in Audiovisual Heritage
- Build our national profile
- Collect, preserve and share multimedia and new media
- Redefine our physical profile.

Underpinning this vision is a commitment to three central themes which are at the core of everything we do:

- Indigenous connections: We work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and partners to showcase their stories and works, to provide training opportunities in audiovisual preservation and to ensure the appropriate management of Indigenous audiovisual collection materials.
- Knowledge and innovation: We speak with authority and focus on new concepts and technologies to increase our impact, efficiency and output.
- Collective genius: We foster a community that is willing and able to generate new ideas, encouraging our internal and external stakeholders to contribute to finding solutions to our challenges.

We will continue to assess and refine our strategic focus and foster a strong vision as well as develop clear and achievable objectives for its operations in 2021-22 and beyond. The NFSA will continue to work to empower Australians to access, celebrate and connect with our cultural memory.

### **NFSA activities in support of your Statement of Expectations**

Please find our planned activities which support the expectations outlined in your letter.

#### ***Providing national leadership and fostering collegiality within the arts sector to assist with its recovery from COVID-19***

The NFSA has taken a leadership role in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to solutions to reduce the ongoing impact of COVID-19 across the arts sector and support recovery. The NFSA coordinated a practical National Collecting Institution (NCI) forum for curators to share their experiences and challenges in building and preserving digital COVID-19 related holdings. This has resulted in strengthening relationships between curators across institutions.

The NFSA will continue sharing its COVID-19 response experiences, learnings and examples of best practice across the arts sector through formal relationships, conference presentations and peer networks. The NFSA is collaborating with the other NCIs, through both Director and Chief Operating Officer networks, and is working with other Canberra-based institutions to consider options and approaches to attract interstate tourists as the sector recovers.

We have committed to a tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to collaborate on a complementary collection and exploitation approach to the building of a national video games collection. This initiative benefits from the sharing of the diverse expertise represented in each institution to identify, collect, preserve and celebrate this unique and massively expanding audiovisual field.

The NFSA is entering into exhibition and public program collaborations with the Art Gallery of NSW (*Mervyn Bishop*), Australian War Memorial (*Action! Film & War*) and the National Gallery of Australia (*Know My Name*) in recognition that pooling resources and expertise can assist with audience engagement recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

As Australia's national audiovisual archive, the NFSA has a strong national focus. The collection contains a wealth of stories and content of relevance to all Australians, increasingly held in digital formats available for remote delivery and emotional engagement. In response to COVID-19 the NFSA has significantly boosted its online engagement with new exhibitions, curated collections, articles and interactive screenings. The NFSA is delivering some of its most-loved events online and is showcasing new ways for audiences to explore the collection through focused, detailed content.

The NFSA is committed to its national profile and will continue to grow its digital delivery of content. Engagement will happen online, on devices and in virtual spaces granting access to regional Australia. This will take the form of website content such as collection stories, curated collections and blogs; social media content and dialogues on platforms used by audiences; selected freely accessible and downloadable content for repurposing by users, through digital media and devices that provide opportunities for enhanced presentation of content.

Since the relaunch of its Canberra exhibition space in 2018 the NFSA has developed an exciting exhibitions program and has been working to expand its touring program to better reach regional audiences. There has been demand for NFSA exhibition content throughout the regions. Following the success of *The Dressmaker Costume Exhibition*, celebrating the work of leading Australian female creatives, the NFSA has developed an enhanced version of the exhibition to tour to Tamworth (NSW), Winton (QLD) and Horsham (VIC) from May 2021. The NFSA is working collaboratively with regional venues to support visitation through marketing, publicity and public programs. This exhibition will assist with economic recovery in these regional centres: for example, as the 2021 Tamworth Country Music Festival is cancelled, *The Dressmaker Costume Exhibition* can help to support Tamworth tourism and stimulate economic activity.

In November 2020 the NFSA made its Digital Directions symposium available as a live-streamed event to increase access around the country. Tickets were made affordable (from \$10 a session) for the benefit of students and emerging practitioners, and in recognition of economic pressures this year. Bringing together speakers from NCIs, broadcasters and streamers, universities, cultural organisations and the technology sector, the symposium was designed to share knowledge and learnings around new practises that can benefit the cultural economy, including artificial intelligence, machine learning and data storage on synthetic DNA.

***Focussing on how our activities can further encourage social cohesion and foster diversity and inclusion;***

As a 'living' archive, the NFSA represents the diversity of Australia and allows for engagement with the nation's memories, stories, creativity and imagination. The NFSA will work to ensure that the stories in its collection continue to be shared as widely and deeply as possible.

The NFSA will deliver a range of programming streams as part of its Arc cinema screenings that have strong audience appeal across demographics. Diversity remains a key philosophy of the NFSA public programming and the Arc Cinema is perhaps the only cinema in the country showcasing fifty percent female directors and a minimum of one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program each month.

We are continuing to work with 20 residential care facilities across NSW in a pilot program that uses collection material (vintage television, newsreels and advertisements) to trigger memory cascades and reduce social isolation among older Australians suffering from memory loss. In partnership with Screening Dementia, the NFSA is also investigating specific digital and on-site activities that can provide specially designed experiences around digitised collection items.

Due to its unique position in the Australian cultural landscape, the NFSA is perfectly placed to be a strong voice in media literacy education and actively participate in the exciting initiatives gaining traction in the current political environment. Media literacy has become a growing issue across society with the rise of social media and the lack of awareness around media production in a digital age. NFSA can drive digital media awareness through education programs for Australian students to critically engage with media in all aspects of life. With overwhelmingly positive feedback on its current education offerings the NFSA will seek to develop a new strategy to encompass digital offerings for students, such as digital excursions, to help drive education and media literacy outcomes.

We are currently working in partnership with the Embassy of the Netherlands on a project to identify, digitise and promote Dutch-related audiovisual content from the national collection for both Australian and Dutch audiences. This model is one which the NFSA hopes to extend further within diplomatic circles to the benefit of both Australian and international communities.

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

The NFSA acknowledges the power of the stories in our collection to foster greater understanding, engagement, communications and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.

We have a longstanding involvement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in supporting them to preserve, access and manage their culture through film and sound. The NFSA works with Indigenous communities to showcase Indigenous Australian stories and works, to provide training opportunities in audiovisual conservation and to ensure the appropriate management of Indigenous audiovisual collection materials. The NFSA will continue to focus on delivering support for preservation and digitisation of Indigenous collections, via partnerships with the Strehlow Research Centre, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association and Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa. It also works in close collaboration with related collecting bodies including the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) to ensure that collection policies and practices are complementary and respectful of all traditional rights. The NFSA will implement its new Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol which

provides the framework to manage, digitise, access and share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works from the NFSA collection in accordance with correct cultural protocols.

The NFSA will implement its new Indigenous Strategy to embed positive change through its interactions, communications and understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures. The Strategy will support NFSA to produce well informed Indigenous policy; create more Indigenous opportunity, build a culturally safe workplace and embed Indigenous perspectives in all Indigenous programming, exhibitions, online content and collection management.

We will launch its second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2023 in the first half of 2021, demonstrating a commitment that goes beyond our day-to-day work and embracing reconciliation as a fundamental part of the NFSA's ideology.

In late 2020, to coincide with NAIDOC week, the NFSA launched the Carriberrie virtual reality experience as a website with an educational resource in partnership with Red Dog VR. The experience was structured around footage shot with nine cultural groups on country and included dance from traditional to contemporary, set across Australian landscapes, featuring 156 dancers and 23 performances.

The NFSA will partner with AIATSIS in early 2021 to host the *Common Problems – Shared Solutions* symposium, which targets the engineering and technical aspects of audiovisual archiving and seeks to draw together the amassed expertise of generations of technical experts from both the analogue and digital eras.

Black Screen continues to deliver its free lending service of Indigenous films to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. In 2021, Black Screen Extra will be launched which is an additional service of Black Screen which will provide curated packages of short Indigenous films relating to the themes of NAIDOC, National Reconciliation Week, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This additional stream to Black Screen will be open to education providers, government agencies, embassies and others to access Indigenous films to promote cultural awareness and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant events.

***Maintaining our financial sustainability, including through exploring opportunities to further grow private sector support and increase own-source revenue.***

The NFSA continues to operate on a strong financial basis to ensure the delivery of its strategic vision. It will maintain its cash reserves and continue its prudent management of the expenditure of its appropriation. A key area of focus will be to continue to identify opportunities to diversify revenue streams, through philanthropy and sponsorship, commercial operations and earned revenue.

NFSA recognises that preserving Australia's audiovisual heritage for future generations is a costly and ongoing task, and to be successful we must grow our income sources and seek to resource the means to achieve new revenue streams within our existing budgets.

We will continue to utilise the collection to earn revenue through our access activities. Access fees, which are paid by third parties for use of the collection in a commercial setting (such as film and documentary makers, and broadcasters), are consistently the NFSA's major source of own-

source revenue. The NFSA will continue to build its access activities, which contribute to the NFSA's financial sustainability and also facilitate access to the national audiovisual collection.

To position itself to expand its revenue streams the NFSA will continue to invest in activities that allow it to better connect with its audiences, supporters and investors. The NFSA will focus on strengthening its brand and national profile as well as growing engagement activities and exhibition programs to build an audience base. We will work to build internal capacity to grow revenue and develop a culture of philanthropy across the organisation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabrielle Trainor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gabrielle Trainor AO  
Chair, NFSA Board