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4 March 2022

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 2021-22**

Thank you for your letter dated 21 November 2021 outlining your expectations for the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) for 2021-22.

The NFSA Board and Executive appreciate your ongoing support and for the recent funding of \$41.9 million in response to the urgent need to protect our audiovisual heritage. This additional support will allow the NFSA to digitise and store at-risk material from its own collection and that of other national collecting institutions thereby preserving and making available for future generations our precious living memories.

Digitisation of the collection not only preserves it for coming generations, but also offers the potential to make the collection more accessible across the country through a variety of digital channels. The ability to expand the reach of the collection in this way will increasingly drive our strategic development as we continue to collect, preserve and share the nation's audio-visual heritage.

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 continues to work towards a vision of empowering Australians to connect with our living memories, to tell our stories, and shape our futures. To ensure the NFSA remains at the forefront of digital culture and continues to evolve along with the creators and users of Australia's audiovisual heritage, the NFSA has set out five strategic priorities in its Corporate Plan 2021-22:

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- Collect and connect
- Engage and celebrate
- Educate and empower
- Innovate and collaborate
- Foster and Lead

The NFSA 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 2022-23 and beyond.

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

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

#### ***Provide leadership and foster collaboration within national and international archive sectors as they respond to the effects of COVID-19***

The NFSA is a leader across the archive sector and offers itself as a collaborator and service provider to peer institutions including, most recently, leading on the digitisation of at-risk audio-visual materials held by 8 National Cultural Institutions. Using the recent injection of funds provided by the Federal Government for this purpose, NFSA will increase its capacity in terms of skills and infrastructure to continue to develop and lead in this area. Our intention, as our collection is increasingly held in digital formats, is to determine how to best make the items available to all Australians via digital media channels, which will be reliant upon the development of a business case considering rights management issues and financial investment.

The NFSA and the National Archives of Australia have also been working together to identify shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration, to address digitisation pressures, and to improve efficiency and knowledge sharing. This work will continue as both agencies recognise the opportunities that can be gained from ongoing collaboration, particularly in relation to the preservation and sharing of audiovisual content, and will inform the NFSA's work to digitise the at-risk audiovisual collections of other NCIs.

COVID-19 has accelerated the use of online media as a means of connection in personal and business spheres. While as a cultural institution we believe in the power of human connection in the context of physical gatherings, nevertheless it has been demonstrated over the past two years that audiences are hungry for arts and cultural content in many different forms, including the streaming of content and talks and presentations conducted online. As an audio-visual specialist, NFSA is exploring how these new practices can help expand access and connection into the future.

The NFSA will share its expertise and ongoing discoveries through formal relationships, conference presentations and peer networks. This includes continuing to promote the institution and the collection internationally as a significant member of groups such as International Federation of Film Archives, International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, and International Federation of Television Archives.

***Contribute to Australian economic and cultural activity as restrictions ease, institutions reopen to the public and tourism resumes.***

The NFSA will continue to work with Canberra-based NCIs to consider options and approaches to attract interstate tourists as the sector recovers.

To maximise reach when sharing the Collection, online and onsite, the NFSA has established engagement partnerships with the National Gallery of Australia (two years of co-programmed and cross-promoted screenings at each venue as well as live-streamed), the Australian War Memorial (co-presentation and joint promotion of their exhibition *Action! Film & War*), the Australian Film Television Radio School (AFTRS) (joint commissioning of new audio-visual work) and the Museum of Australian Democracy (joint online excursions for schools about media literacy).

The NFSA is also renewing its partnership with 11 other Canberra cultural institutions to extend the popular Cultural Icons national marketing campaign promoting cultural tourism to the Capital. In 2022, the campaign will be extended thanks to another \$70,000 match-funding from VisitCanberra.

The NFSA is using the recently launched *Australians & Hollywood* exhibition as an engine to drive economic and cultural activity, leveraging partnerships with government and the private sector to amplify the national reach of our first original show in two decades. Approximately 50 percent of ticket buyers are visiting from outside the ACT. Financial and strategic support from VisitCanberra, through both the Major Event Fund and the Tourism Marketing Cooperative Fund, will increase reach into the national tourism market, bolstered by marketing partnerships with hospitality partners such as Accor. Local market access will be supported by collaborations with the Australian National University, University of Canberra and other NCIs. Finally, industry awareness will be enhanced through partnerships with organisations such as AusFilm, *Australians in Film*, National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), AFTRS, the Australian Centre for Moving Image and the major film festivals.

The NFSA will also continue to support content creators, exhibitors and educators across Australia, through access to NFSA collection material. In particular, the NFSA encourages students, teachers, independent film-makers and Australian academics to share NFSA collection material with their audiences, by providing reduced rates to access NFSA collection content through the Take Three and Zero Fee Licence programs.

***Support recovery in regional, remote and outer metropolitan areas through collection touring, exhibitions and outreach programs;***

As Australia's national audio-visual 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.

Thanks to the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program, the NFSA is touring *The Dressmaker* Costume exhibition to regional Australia this year, with seasons in Jervis Bay and Horsham (where the original movie was filmed). Through its Non-Theatrical Lending Collection, the NFSA also makes low-cost screenings possible in remote locations through a regional network of non-profit community groups and film societies. Our film programming for Arc Cinema in Canberra is also increasingly made available to screen around the country, including through partnerships with independent cinemas (partly through the Independent Cinema Association of Australia).

As more of the Collection is digitised, the NFSA continues to boost its online engagement with curated collections, articles, interactive websites and live-streamed screenings and education programs. Rich audiovisual content is accessed nationally through 1.8 million annual visits to the NFSA website, 17 million engagements with our social media channels and 7 million views of our YouTube channel.

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.

***Promote inclusion, diversity and social cohesion by providing greater opportunities for all Australians to access arts and culture, including through digital channels***

Re-examining our collection from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, as well as through the lens of contemporary multicultural Australia, is a priority for NFSA. The collection offers rich and deep possibilities to explore, recognise and celebrate the experiences and achievements of all Australians – and to acknowledge longstanding inequities in terms of the dominant voices typically found in collecting institutions.

This work will be increasingly visible through our programs, whether online or on site, our collaborations and commissions, our collecting strategies, and our institutional partnerships.

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 creative talent behind the camera, and a minimum of one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander program each month. In the 12 months to 31 July 2021, 54% of screenings featured women-led talent above the line (directors, writers and/or producers); specifically, women were the directors of 24% of the content, and made up 57% of guests for Q&A sessions, talks or panel discussions; 10% of the programs had a focus on LGBTQI+ content and 16% of our guests were from the LGBTQI+ communities; 9% of the programs focused on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander content and 10% of guests were First Nations peoples.

In a bid to make the collection more accessible to all Australians, the NFSA is working to improve access and participation for people with a disability. This is done through increased captioning of digital media, programmatic collaborations with disability groups such as Bus Stop Films and a pilot program to customise selected screenings for older Australians living with dementia.

Each year NFSA also waive or reduce fees to selected programs for audiences of limited means, often in partnership with specific community groups and make temporary exhibitions accessible on a Pay-What-You-Can day.

The most effective way to make the Collection widely accessible remains to disseminate curated items with expert interpretation for free through the NFSA's many and far-reaching digital channels, supported through targeted communication campaigns.

***Continuing to foster appreciation and understanding of Indigenous arts, culture and knowledge systems, and contribute to a professional, viable and ethical Indigenous cultural sector***

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. In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the NFSA seeks to understand our responsibilities and opportunities to further truth telling as part of our commitment to Reconciliation.

The NFSA collection is open to creatives and presents opportunities to reimagine our shared audiovisual heritage and produce works with diverse perspectives. There is a wealth of material in the collection that can be used to explore and express Australian heritage and contemporary culture. Most recently, the NFSA has commissioned Wiradjuri filmmaker and poet, Jazz Money, to use the national audiovisual collection to create a new digital work that will offer a personal vision of Australia. The international premiere will be in partnership with the BFI, in the UK in 2022 and domestically at Arc Cinema in Canberra. The complete piece will be brought into the NFSA collection and will be available to the public. Partnering with AFTRS, the NFSA also commissioned Worimi filmmaker Genevieve Grieves of Garuwa productions to create a three-channel video essay on First Nations filmmaker Warwick Thornton, from material held in the Collection. The resulting work opened as part of the Australians & Hollywood exhibition and will also be shared by AFTRS.

The NFSA continues to collaborate with Indigenous curators and practitioners on the co-design of exhibitions, education and public programs.

The NFSA has adopted an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocol to strengthen the organisation's commitment to best practice in the area of ICIP rights and to create accessible guidelines for the use of Indigenous content held by, acquired or otherwise used or relied on by the NFSA.

***Engaging in activities to enrich arts and cultural education at all levels***

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an increasingly critical life skill is the ability to navigate the innumerable sources of information that reach us constantly through the media, and particular social media channels. Due to its unique position in the Australian cultural landscape and its founding membership of the Australian Media Literacy Alliance, the NFSA is establishing itself as a strong voice in media literacy education.

While school visits onsite are currently limited by the COVID pandemic, over 14,000 students have already accessed our Media & Me virtual school excursions this year. The NFSA can drive digital media awareness and will continue to pursue its aspirations to develop best practice educational resources on media literacy that can be delivered throughout Australia.

In light of limited schools attendance due to COVID, the NFSA continues to deliver education outcomes through other means. As part of an ongoing partnership with the ANU's School of Digital Humanities, for example, students use Collection material to create digital engagement prototypes. One such prototype, Home of the Blizzard, will evolve into an interactive educational website centred around Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition over a hundred years ago.

***Maintain and strengthen the financial sustainability of the Archive by increasing own-source revenue, philanthropy and private sector support***

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 the 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 for a wide variety of producers, broadcasters, and media artists.

Own-source revenue raised through public engagement – exhibitions, public programs and education – has remained relatively stable in spite of ongoing COVID impact, pointing to the potential for growth once the pandemic recedes. This activity is also supported by modest but growing external support in the form of grants and cash sponsorship.

The institution will be investing in new audience development and marketing approaches and will also increase its focus on philanthropic development.

Yours faithfully,



Caroline Elliott

Chair, NFSA Board