



**NATIONAL FILM
AND SOUND ARCHIVE
OF AUSTRALIA**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2022-25

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have practised, nurtured and developed the world's oldest continuous human culture over tens of thousands of years.

We feel privileged to live and work on this land, and to collaborate with its extraordinary people.

We at the NFSA pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past and present; and acknowledge and thank the Indigenous partners, creators and staff whose insights, talents, productions and generosity of spirit are essential to our work.

As a national cultural organisation, it is an honour and a joy to assist in preserving, promoting and making accessible Australian First Nations stories.

Image: Reflections: the work of Warwick Thornton

Who we are

The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia is the national audiovisual cultural institution.

Australians were early adopters of film and sound technologies, and the appetite to make, enjoy and discuss audiovisual culture remains strong.

From our earliest recordings in the 1890s to the latest games and immersive digital productions, the collection captures not only our technical and artistic achievements, but also our stories, obsessions and myths; our triumphs and sorrows; who we were, are, and want to be. Our memories preserved with the uncanny immediacy of recorded sound and motion pictures.

The collection dates back to 1935, making it one of the first audiovisual archives in the world. Originally known as the National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library and operating under the auspices of the

Commonwealth National Library, the NFSA became an independent cultural organisation in 1984.

Today, the NFSA collection includes more than 4 million items, and not only film, video and audio recordings, but also contextual materials such as costumes, scripts, props, photographs and promotional materials. It is a diverse, dynamic and often surprising repository, ranging from items inducted into the UNESCO Memory of the World register to sporting matches, game shows and advertising jingles.

As well as preserving these items for future generations, NFSA curators continue to grow the collection ensuring it provides an unbroken record of life in Australia, and of Australian creativity.

Public programs and services – including Sounds of Australia, NFSA Restores, screenings and events, and educational programs delivered online and at our headquarters in Canberra – ensure that the

collection is available for enjoyment, learning, research and re-use by creators.

In 2021, items from the collection were viewed more than 121 million times around the country, making it one of the country's most vital and utilised cultural resources.

In the digital age, the NFSA's wealth of stories captured in sounds and moving images will be increasingly available on demand across the country.

Current context

Audiovisual media are all-pervasive in the 21st century, dominating the various screens, speakers and devices that increasingly inform and enhance our engagement with the world and each other.

While film, audio and video recording technologies have been in use for more than a century, it is in the 21st century that digital distribution has turbocharged both consumption and creation.

Audiovisual delivers news and information as well as entertainment and art. Audiovisual is how we communicate with each other – a phenomenon accelerated during the COVID pandemic. Education, health and wellbeing initiatives are increasingly delivered via audiovisual media.

For more than 85 years the NFSA collection has captured Australia's AV history in all its forms. As we approach our 40th anniversary as an independent cultural organisation in 2024, we are proud custodians of a unique and extremely valuable public cultural asset.

The recent history of our organisation has been dominated by the increasingly urgent need to digitise our collections for long-term preservation, particularly those items on unstable and obsolete carriers such as magnetic tape. The Australian Government's investment of \$42M over four years, granted in 2021, has enabled the NFSA to fast-track this preservation activity, and to digitise at-risk items in the collections of seven other national institutions. This is the Audiovisual Australia (AVA) project.

AVA allows us to contemplate an exciting strategic cycle that will exploit the potential of an increasingly digital collection. A digital collection will be more discoverable by more people, including through uses of search tools enabled by Artificial Intelligence (AI). And a digital collection will also be more readily available for users of all kinds: industry partners, cultural owners, researchers, educators and – increasingly – all Australians seeking information, inspiration and entertainment.

But as with so many cultural forms, audiovisual media can be misused. Fake news and cyberbullying are just two hazards with the capacity to mislead, manipulate and malign. The NFSA celebrates and promotes Australian AV achievement; but also facilitates critical engagement with it.

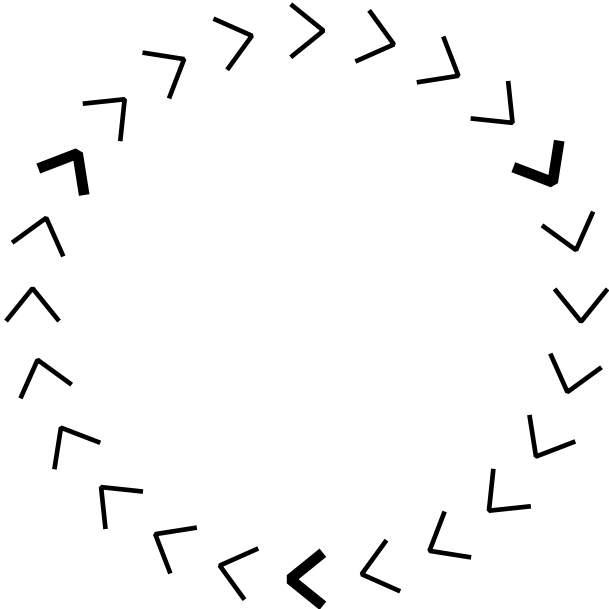
Against the realisation of all these opportunities is the fact of a tightening resource base, particularly in terms of aging physical infrastructure and shrinking workforce. Initiating projects to enable our strategic vision will remain a challenge. But as we aim to serve more people, we will explore opportunities to increase our earned and contributed sources of revenue in tandem.

In the digital age, we aim to be the country's most dynamic and valued cultural organisation.

Digital transformation cycle

1 - Preservation

AVA funding allows us to digitise the collection for preservation



2 - Discoverability

A digital collection is more searchable including through AI tools

3 - Accessibility

A more discoverable collection will be accessed and used by more people and will help generate more social and economic value

Purpose

The NFSA tells the national story by collecting, preserving and sharing audiovisual media, the cultural experience platforms of our time

Goal

In the digital age, the NFSA should be Australia's most dynamic and valued cultural organisation

Priorities

Specific priorities for next three to five years

- Relevance
- Reach
- Revenue

Relevance priorities

A collection that tells the national story in all its diversity

A reliable and established leader and collaborator with partners in the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector, and public screen and commercial media industries here and overseas, contributing to and promoting the value of Australia's screen and cultural ambitions and achievements

An institution that evolves with industry and audiences, adapting our collecting to reflect new technologies and content

Knowledge

- Collection Policy
- Periodic collection audit
- Review approaches to cataloguing and metadata

Development

- Collection Strategy and Plan
- Expand curatorial and accessioning capacity to permit more proactive collecting
- Address cultural and social diversity issues in terms of maker, user, content and form
- Innovate in approaches to the preservation of digital media, including games and social
- Through the AVA project, invest in a collection that is increasingly digital

Use

- Develop Indigenous Connections programs, including partnerships, protocols, provision of services, repatriation of content, collection and interpretation of materials
- Invest in tools providing greater accessibility to the collection
- Cultural, academic, artistic and industry partnerships
- Educational services, and other uses of the collection for constructive social outcomes

Reach priorities

A collection that is readily discoverable

A collection that is widely used and enjoyed

Discoverability

- Better and new uses of digital tools to increase discoverability and usage by all user segments nationally

Networks

- Collaborate with partners to enrich the collection, to connect the NFSA to new networks, and to encourage new and wider uses including through academic, industry and GLAM sector collaborations

Accessibility

- Invest in a new website to expand frequency and depth of collection use
- Explore streaming media opportunities to provide new ways to experience the collection nationwide
- Present opportunities to experience, discuss and learn about audiovisual culture both in person and online

Revenue priorities

A loved and trusted institutional brand with a growing audience

An energised, original, forward-thinking and effective organisation

Audience development

- Better understanding of the audience and potential audiences
- New Customer Relationship Management systems and approaches
- Increase depth of public engagement with institution

Philanthropy

- Build cases for support and connect to philanthropic sector to secure additional private investment in programs and activities

Commercial

- Explore revenue-generating/cost-offsetting industry partnerships, including pay-per-view streaming opportunities and co-production of original content
- Growth in licensing programs
- Energise our headquarters in Canberra to attract broader visitation and business development opportunities

Government

- Continually demonstrate value to the Australian taxpayer
- Continually demonstrate relevance to government policy objectives
- Make the case for increased support to enable the NFSA to reach its full potential in the audiovisual age

Delivering for the community

The NFSA is at all times aware of its responsibilities to the Australian public as a national cultural institution. Our strategic vision has been designed to address the needs and expectations of our users, partners and funders

Our strategy is closely aligned to the five pillars of the National Cultural Policy – *Revive*: a place for every story, a story for every place

First Nations first

- Celebrating and promoting First Nations viewpoints through the national AV collection
- A new focus on providing archival services to First Nations communities and organisations
- A new focus on returning content in the collection to original owners and communities including to support the revitalisation of language
- Commitment to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols and to strengthening and promoting Indigenous collecting and usage protocols

A place for every story

- Making sure our collecting and storytelling reflect and serve the diversity and cultural dynamism of contemporary Australia
- Recognising Australian citizen creators alongside professional practitioners
- Making the collection increasingly searchable and usable nationwide
- Continuation of NFSA's Arc Cinema as a flagship venue for the enjoyment and discussion of screen culture

Centrality of the artist

- An ambassador for Australian creativity, championing creators through our collecting and sharing activity
- Investigating opportunities for new revenue generation for Intellectual Property owners and creators including new re-use, content development and distribution initiatives
- An increasing focus on the burgeoning Australian games industry, developers and artefacts
- Preserving the legacy of Australian creators

Strong institutions

- Consistently demonstrating value for money to the Australian public
- An international leader in audiovisual archiving dedicated to preserving and promoting the works and legacy of Australian practitioners
- Advocating for the continuing relevance and value of the arts and cultural sector for all Australians
- Working smarter with our resourcing, and looking for new opportunities to build our revenue base
- The NFSA's headquarters in Canberra reimagined as a local cultural hub for experiencing the collection and for conversation
- Actively collaborating with peer institutions and all levels of government to enhance and promote Canberra as a livable and visitable city

Reaching the audience

- Increasing focus on using digital tools to improve services for Australians wherever they live including for discovery, learning and enjoyment
- Media literacy curriculum developed for eventual national distribution
- Facilitating access to our unique collection for use in exhibitions, programs, teaching and research



**NATIONAL FILM
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OF AUSTRALIA**



Australian Government

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The NFSA has offices in Sydney and Melbourne and Access Centres available in state libraries in Hobart, Brisbane, Adelaide, Darwin and Perth.

NFSA.GOV.AU