Canberra's national institutions

FRIDAY, 22 JUNE 2018

CANBERRA

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Members in attendance: Ms Brodtmann, Mr Morton.

Terms of Reference for the Inquiry:
To inquire into and report on:
The range of innovative strategies that Canberra's national institutions are using to maintain viability and relevance to sustainably grow their profile, visitor numbers, and revenue, including:
1. creating a strong brand and online presence;
2. experimenting with new forms of public engagement and audience participation;
3. conducting outreach outside of Canberra;
4. cultivating private sector support;
5. developing other income streams; and
6. ensuring the appropriateness of governance structures; and
any other relevant matter the Committee wishes to examine, including the process for establishing new institutions.
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CAMPTON, Ms Ann, Assistant Secretary, Collections and Cultural Heritage, Arts Division, Department of Communications and the Arts

Committee met at 9:05

CHAIR (Mr Morton): I declare open this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories for the inquiry into Canberra's national institutions. Canberra's national institutions are a major drawcard for our nation's capital, attracting local, interstate and overseas visitors. They contribute significantly to the local economy and to Canberra's culture. Today is the committee's first public hearing for this inquiry, and we are pleased to have in attendance representatives from a range of national institutions that are based in Canberra. In particular, the committee hopes that these public hearings will assist in developing a clear understanding of the innovative ways that national institutions engage with both visitors and the private sector. This includes new forms of public engagement and audience participation, reaching out to the community beyond Canberra and creating a strong online presence.

In accordance with the committee's resolution on 13 October 2016, this hearing will be broadcast on the parliament's website, and the proof and official transcripts of proceedings will be published on the parliament's website. Those present here today are advised that filming and recording are permitted during the hearing, but I also remind members of the media who may be present or listening on the web of the need to fairly and accurately report the proceedings of the committee.

The committee has also resolved today to form a subcommittee for the purpose of the collection of evidence, which comprises for today's collection of evidence of myself as chair and Gai Brodtmann as deputy chair. There will be a series of further public hearings in August arranged by the committee.

I now welcome the representatives of the Department of Communications and the Arts to give evidence today. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and therefore has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may regarded as a contempt of parliament. The evidence given today will be recorded by Hansard and attracts parliamentary privilege. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to discussion.

Dr Arnott: Thank you, Chair. I don't have a formal opening statement but just want to note that in the Arts portfolio we have a number of cultural agencies. This committee is concerned with six of them which are located in Canberra. With some of the information we give, we just need to be clear about whether it's applying to just the Canberra institutions or more broadly—just as a sort of reminder, because we often think about them as simply Canberra. So I'll try and make that clear when responding to your questions.

CHAIR: This is our first hearing, and some of the people that are going to give evidence later will probably benefit from hearing from me on what I'm trying to establish. I'll ask some questions. They will seem naive, they will seem terrible, but I want to get the answers in Hansard. I want to know: what is the point of the national institutions? What are we trying to achieve as a whole? The argument that I'm trying to make is, what is the strategic importance for our nation of having these institutions? I see the institutions as a collection of individual entities. But I think that when we step back and make a strategic case about their importance, and what they're trying to achieve, as a collection, here in Canberra, then from that basis we can better understand the objectives of those institutions as a whole and make a case in relation to ensuring that their resourcing allows them to fulfil their objectives. What is your view in relation to the important role that the institutions play, as a whole? Why are they there?

Dr Arnott: It's quite a complex question, and you can come at it in a number of ways. Really they are the keepers of the nation's cultural heritage. They're the keepers of our history, of our art and of our heritage assets. They are responsible primarily for continuing to collect artefacts of our history, our culture and our heritage. Obviously, another key aspect is to bring that heritage alive: to give access to the public to appreciate Australia's history and heritage; to educate schoolchildren and others about Australia's history, heritage, art and collections; to promote the uniqueness of Australia through those through those collections; and to ensure that everyone around Australia, given their national status, has access and appreciates those cultural and heritage assets.

CHAIR: So why is it important for people to have that appreciation and understanding?

Dr Arnott: The history of our national identity is defined by our history, our heritage, our culture and our art.
CHAIR: Is there a risk if there are certain sections of our community that haven't had the benefit of visiting and engaging with our cultural institutions and therefore not understanding fully our culture and our history?

Dr Arnott: I wouldn't say risk, but I would say that there is an obligation on our institutions to ensure that their cultural assets and their collections are available and reach out to everyone around the country.

CHAIR: In your role in the department do you take a look at who is accessing the institutions, based on education levels, based on age, based on their geography and where they're from based on other demographic factors—university educated as opposed to non-university educated or female as opposed to two male? One example I'm interested in is newly arrived migrants as opposed to Australians born here in Australia.

Dr Arnott: No, we don't collect the data at that level of detail. We do aggregate visitor information and so on. I'm sure some of the institutions may be able to answer that question because I'm sure some of them do survey their visitation and the outcomes of their regional activities. But, no, the department doesn't collect that level of detail across the course of the institutions.

CHAIR: I have a final question. I know the deputy chair has a long series of questions. We are both very excited about this inquiry, to be honest. I'm a Western Australian member of parliament, so I am very interested in your Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program. How successful has that been? What are the types of outreach and tours that have been funded? Are you making demand from the institutions? If you had more resources, could you do more, or are you finding that your resourcing of that program is sufficient to meet the demand from the institutions? Are there any barriers in the way of institutions accessing those funds?

Dr Arnott: That's a two-part question.

CHAIR: I would rather just throw you the questions I have on that issue and then let you go longer rather than toing and froing too much.

Dr Arnott: Sure. On the second part of your question in terms of the quantum of funds that's available, our experience is that the current $1 million per annum appears to be sufficient funding.

CHAIR: Sorry, $1 million?

Dr Arnott: Yes, $1 million per annum. It seems to be sufficient to meet the touring needs of the institutions and they are able to undertake extensive touring activities nationally through that funding. Ann, do you have information about what tours are being supported?

Ms Campton: We've got total numbers.

Dr Arnott: Yes, we've got total numbers. The program, since its inception in 2010—relatively recently—has funded over 90 exhibitions in 153 venues around the country. I don't appear to have a state-by-state—

Ms Campton: No, but we could provide that.

CHAIR: If you could, that would be very helpful. Is it a co-funding arrangement? If I were an institution and I came to you for funding of $500,000 for a tour or an exhibition, would that tour or exhibition cost me $1.5 million, so I would have to find $1 million? What percentage of each project are you funding?

Dr Arnott: I would assume it would vary. Certainly the institutions would put in some of their own resources because they have staff and so on who are employed to curate and present exhibitions. I think the purpose of the NCITO program is to cover the actual touring costs—the freight and travel and the installation work and so on that's needed to actually get that exhibition into a different venue. It would be a balance, but NCITO would support the bulk of the actual touring costs.

CHAIR: I'm just interested to know: if you're meeting demand, that may be because the actual total cost of touring an exhibition leaves with the institution any costs which are not funded through this program. The PACER program is run by the department of education, which funds school students to come here to Canberra. I think it's very important. The committee will be pleased to know that I was going through my archive box from my primary school days and I found the report on my year 6 journey to Canberra and my workbook from the visit to the Electoral Education Centre. I'd probably get higher marks now than I did back then. It's a very important program. Does your department have any views in relation to that program? Is it best located within the department of education or is it better located somewhere else, like in your department? How can that program be better?

Dr Arnott: It's not for me to express a view about where a program should be located. It's administered by the department of education, so you would need to ask them detailed questions. Obviously I'm aware that it's an incredibly important program for the institutions and for Canberra. You may want to ask the institutions about whether there could be improvements made to it, but obviously it's important that as many school children get the opportunity, from our perspective, to visit the institutions and to experience our national culture and heritage.
CHAIR: Has there been a consideration by the department to mirror the PACER program, which assists young students to come to Canberra to learn about our nation's story, our culture, our heritage and our history? Other sectors of the Australian community may find it difficult to come here and benefit, in a strategic way, from learning and experiencing that story.

Dr Arnott: No, I don't believe so.

Ms BRODTMANN: Thanks again for appearing today and for your submission. I've got two main questions. They're about the relationship between the department and each of the national institutions that fall under your umbrella. How does it work? Is it the same for each of the institutions?

Dr Arnott: Yes, it is the same. The responsibility of the department is really to work with the institutions to ensure that their accountability and their governance arrangements are appropriate to the legislation and to the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act. It's a quite dry relationship in some ways. Obviously we work with them closely in terms of the use of their funding and the way that they roll out their programs, remain informed and provide advice to the minister on their activities.

Ms BRODTMANN: You oversee how they're administering the PGPA Act?

Dr Arnott: To a degree. They have independent boards and they have independent acts of parliament, so they are responsible to the parliament directly in terms of how they acquit their funds, as it were. The Department of Finance is obviously a key player in that. The department's role is to support the minister in terms of appointments to boards, assessing corporate planning documents and ensuring that they're appropriate, and assessing annual reports and so on, so the governance around the institution is our main focus.

Ms BRODTMANN: Just on that, you've got the National Gallery under you, haven't you?

Dr Arnott: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: You saw the audit report last week that highlighted a number of concerns on financial management and performance management. There were reports that alluded to a culture that was lacking direction, so are you working with the National Gallery on addressing those issues?

Dr Arnott: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: You've got their independent board and, of course, their own executive and management system, so how does the interface actually work in terms of you addressing those issues and implementing those recommendations?

Dr Arnott: It happens through regular discussions between the department and senior management of the organisation. A departmental officer is an observer at their council meetings and so is able to provide advice on government requirements, clarifications about what's expected and support in terms of their activities to progress the response to the recommendations.

Ms BRODTMANN: Have you set a deadline for when those recommendations need to be implemented?

Dr Arnott: Not directly, but I think they would be expedited as soon as practically possible.

Ms BRODTMANN: Would it be your role to set that deadline, or would it be the executive and the board of the gallery?

Dr Arnott: It'll be the gallery's responsibility to determine the timing.

Ms BRODTMANN: But would it be your responsibility to say that the implementation has actually been implemented?

Dr Arnott: Again, it's the gallery's responsibility, because they're directly accountable to the parliament, so, therefore, they need to act on that. Our role is a support role to assist them to make sure they have the appropriate information and understanding about what's required so that they can progress those reforms.

Ms BRODTMANN: Do you believe that they have the appropriate understanding?

Dr Arnott: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: What do you see the major challenges to be that all those various institutions that fall under your umbrella are facing today?
Dr Arnott: They would vary, and you may wish to ask each of them. But I'm obviously aware that they face financial constraint, as they have for a number of years, and they will certainly tell you that. But I think, in the scheme of things, on the numbers that we collect, they're doing an incredible job in terms of attracting increased visitor numbers, getting really fantastic engagement with their digital offerings and being able to tour extensively both nationally and internationally. So they are achieving an awful lot, but the constraints of government funding are what they are, and that affects the whole of government.

Ms BRODTMANN: We can go through each of them, if you want to. Are there any that are facing more challenges than others?

CHAIR: It's like picking one of your children!

Dr Arnott: That's right.

Ms BRODTMANN: They're all different.

Dr Arnott: Yes, they are all different.

Ms BRODTMANN: And they've all got very different histories and provenances. You've got the Museum of Australian Democracy. What are the challenges that are faced there?

Dr Arnott: That is a newly established corporate entity under the PGPA Act, so it's newly independent. It used to be part of the department directly, so they're in the relatively early stages of their development as a national cultural institution. They obviously have the challenges of looking after the Old Parliament House building, which is a big responsibility for the nation. But they're focused on their agenda to make democracy meaningful for the Australian public. I'm not aware of any other specific challenges that they may face, but you could ask them that.

Ms BRODTMANN: National Film and Sound Archive?

Dr Arnott: National Film and Sound Archive has a new director who is starting to set the new strategic direction for the organisation, which is fantastic. He has a fabulous plan for the institution's future. Its major challenge, which is well known and on the public record, is that it has a large amount of magnetic tape in its archive which needs to be digitised within the next seven or so years. It needs to work out how to do that.

Ms BRODTMANN: Do you think it's got the resources it needs to do that?

Dr Arnott: I'm hopeful that it does, but you may well want to ask them whether they feel that they do.

Ms BRODTMANN: There's also the issue of its home, which has been in the media.

Dr Arnott: I'm aware that the CEO has an ambition to have a new home, but it has its current home in the building at the front of the ANU, so it's not in jeopardy.

Ms BRODTMANN: Have there been conversations with you about a new home?

Dr Arnott: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: Where is that at?

Dr Arnott: The discussions are proceeding—it's a long term goal, so we will continue to discuss what might be possible.

Ms BRODTMANN: For a purpose-built site?

Dr Arnott: Yes, I believe that's the CEO's idea.

Ms BRODTMANN: The National Gallery?

Dr Arnott: As you're aware, in the budget we announced a package of funding of $16½ million dollars plus another $5 million from departmental funds to address some urgent capital requirements. So that's a challenge for them and they need to get that work progressed and underway, and those issues resolved as soon as possible. But, obviously, fantastic that they've received the capital funding to be able to achieve that.

Ms BRODTMANN: Any other challenges for the gallery?

Dr Arnott: You're aware of the ANAO report, and they need to address those recommendations. As you're aware, they have a new director starting in a couple of weeks—2 July—so it will be a phase for the new director to get across his brief and work out strategies for the future of the National Gallery.

Ms BRODTMANN: The National Library, who made an excellent submission, and your thoughts on the challenges—they have been well documented too, particularly with Trove. I'm aware of the Trove challenge—and I think the chair is as well—but are there any other challenges faced by the National Library?
Dr Arnott: Other than the general financial constraints on staffing and so on, I think the Library is doing an amazing job as we all do. Obviously, they were a good beneficiary of the modernisation funding that came out in the budget before last which they're putting to fabulous use, and they have highlighted in their submission that that's not ongoing funding so there's a need to see what happens post that modernisation funding.

Ms BRODTMANN: The National Museum?

Dr Arnott: The National Museum is doing some great work in terms of its capital developments. The director has great ambition for the museum, so I don't see them as having specific challenges other than the ones I've articulated that generally apply across all of them.

Ms BRODTMANN: In terms of the financial constraints?

Dr Arnott: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: And, finally, the Portrait Gallery.

Dr Arnott: The Portrait Gallery is, again, a relatively young institution doing an incredible job. I'm not aware of specific challenges. The main thing that I think you should be aware of, but may not be, is that they will be closing the gallery for a period of time in 2019. They will manage that extremely well, but it will be a disruptive process while they get some of the building—

CHAIR: I wasn't aware. What's the process?

Dr Arnott: There's some building defects that need to be rectified, which have been funded by the government, and they will be progressing over—

CHAIR: How old is the building?

Ms BRODTMANN: It's not good.

CHAIR: It's what—five years old?

Ms BRODTMANN: It's not old. How old is it—it's an award-winning building.

Ms Campton: It's 10 years old.

CHAIR: Is it not still covered by the contract with the builder?

Ms Campton: It's being managed by the Department of Finance. The rectification works are being managed through them. They've taken a decision that the nature of the works is significant enough that it will be easier to close the gallery and get the work done, because it affects flooring and a whole lot of other things.

Ms BRODTMANN: How long is it closed?

Ms Campton: Up to six months.

Ms BRODTMANN: Are you working with finance and the Portrait Gallery on that?

Ms Campton: Yes. We're well aware of it.

CHAIR: Is there an opportunity during that time for a travelling exhibition?

Ms Campton: Yes, and I'm sure the director will speak to that. That's what he's talking about: outreach activities during that six month period. I don't have details on that, but he may be able to give you more.

CHAIR: It's an opportunity.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes, it's an opportunity, but it's also pretty ordinary that you have this award-winning building and you've got these defects after such a short time. What was the cost of that? Do you know how much the repairs are costing the taxpayer?

Ms Campton: I think we'd have to have to talk to Department of Finance about that. It's $5 million.

Ms BRODTMANN: And what are the defects?

Ms Campton: Flooring is definitely one of them, and windows. There has been water leaking, so there are whole lot of things as a consequence of that that they have to repair. We can certainly provide you a list of the information.

Dr Arnott: Certainly, the director will have—

Ms Campton: Or the director should be able to.

Ms BRODTMANN: That would be good.

Ms Campton: We can let him know before he appears, and he can bring the information with him.
Ms BRODTMANN: It would be good to know if the $5 million is going to cover the lot, and if there's been a really rigorous overview of what's actually happened and a clear understanding that the $5 million is where it finishes.

Ms Campton: When I say six months, I know the chair of the board is hoping it will take less, but that's the conservative estimate.

CHAIR: Can you outline for me the process for the establishment of a new institution.

Dr Arnott: That's an interesting question. We've got two recent examples. The National Portrait Gallery, while it had been in existence as a part of the department for some time, was established a few years ago as an independent—what we now call corporate—Commonwealth entity with its own board and management and so on. That's a decision of the government, really, to be honest. That's how it happens. The government can decide to create a new corporate entity.

CHAIR: You go to the National Capital Authority's exhibition at the side of the lake and there's a thing where you can write down what the next institution to be created should be. It could be okay for this case, but there is no clear, existing path for the creation of an institution—it is decisions that are made by governments from time to time, and once that decision is made the path is created?

Dr Arnott: I think that's the correct articulation of the history of how that's come about.

CHAIR: As a department, do you consider whether or not there should be—or there is—a gap?

Dr Arnott: We're certainly aware of members of the public raising ideas about that, but, no, we don't actively consider advising government on whether there should or shouldn't be another national cultural institution. It's a matter for government.

Ms BRODTMANN: So you don't do a gap analysis on cultural institutions, but you mentioned that the public have made suggestions. What are the suggestions that have come from the community?

Dr Arnott: In submissions we've seen suggestions for a national resting place for indigenous remains, as an institution. We've seen suggestions for an Australian national theatre.

Ms BRODTMANN: What's an Australian national theatre?

Dr Arnott: I'm not sure. It was in one of the submissions that I—

Ms Campton: We should say that we've only become aware of some of these through your submission process.

CHAIR: Which is good!

Ms Campton: The national resting place is something we were more familiar with.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes, I'm aware of that and have been in conversations with the War Memorial on that.

Dr Arnott: I don't think we've been particularly aware of persistent requests for a new cultural institution to fill a gap. I think this inquiry has put forth a few more ideas that we weren't aware of in the past. The National Resting Place is certainly something that's been considered a number of times.

CHAIR: Is there a problem in having a whole range of institutions under different ministerial responsibility? Does that create opportunities? Does it create issues? Is there a body that I can point to that is the voice of the collective institutions?

Dr Arnott: No, I don't believe so.

CHAIR: I know other countries may have a council of former government leaders or former heads of state or something, but there's no existing advisory body or council that would advocate on behalf of institutions that you're aware of at the moment?

Dr Arnott: No. I'm aware that the directors of the institutions work together closely and meet regularly and coordinate their efforts as far as possible, as do members of their staff, but there is not a formal, overarching advisory body that looks at all of the national institutions, other than, obviously, the department, but we don't represent them.

Ms BRODTMANN: Would there be benefit in that, in putting them all under one department?

Dr Arnott: We haven't done an assessment of that. I would think there'd be pros and cons, but, no, we haven't done a formal assessment of that.

Ms Campton: It's certainly the rule of those departments who have agencies under their jurisdiction that they will also talk across departments. We have meetings that often involve agencies that aren't in our portfolio on issues that we think are of common interest to them.
CHAIR: Thank you for your attendance here today. You've been asked to provide some information, so please do so by Friday, 6 July. You'll also be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and you'll have an opportunity to request any corrections to transcription errors.
ATHY, Ms Kareena, Deputy Director-General, ACT Government

RAMSAY, Mr Gordon, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government

[09:37]

CHAIR: I now welcome representatives of the ACT government to give evidence today. Is there anything you would like to add to the capacity in which you appear today?

Ms Arthy: I'm in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, responsible for economic development.

CHAIR: Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and, therefore, has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The evidence given today will be recorded by Hansard and attracts parliamentary privilege. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to discussion.

Mr Ramsay: Before we commence, and especially as we are thinking about national identity and culture, I do want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that we are meeting on and that the national institutions are located on. I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Also before I begin, and for the sake of full transparency, I do want to note, for the record, that my wife conducts a small business in exhibition design and has had contracts with the national institutions, including recently working on a contract with the National Archives for a travelling exhibition.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee to speak about the importance of the national institutions. I'm pleased to represent the ACT government today in my capacity as Minister for the Arts and Community Events. Canberra's national cultural institutions are not only an intrinsic part of the artistic and cultural life of this city but they are also, collectively, a representation of what it is to be Australian. They tell the stories of where we came from, who we are and who we hope to be. These institutions belong to all Australians and should be accessible to all Australians. They are important contributors to the ACT economy via their direct employment and their expenditure, as well as through the visitors that they bring into the ACT. So the ACT government strongly calls for ongoing and increased Australian government support for the national institutions. At the same time, we recognise that these institutions are already delivering high-quality programs to the best of their ability, despite the funding cuts over many years.

As a collective brand, the national cultural institutions located in Canberra leave a lasting impression in the minds of all who visit. They form an integral part of the Canberra visitor experience, with a record 2.75 million domestic overnight visitors and 243,000 international visitors to Canberra in 2017. This includes more than 162,000 school aged children from all over Australia, who travel to Canberra to learn about civics, citizenship, democracy, history, science and art. This itself is an important foundational experience for young Australians, regardless of their birthplace, to understand more about their country and what it means to be Australian. With Australia's capital city now connected to a global marketplace, the national institutions provide an important first point of engagement for international visitors. This makes Canberra the showcase destination for Australian history, identity, culture and innovation. The outreach services and the travelling exhibitions of the national institutions provide valuable educational and cultural connections for people outside the ACT. However, reductions in operational budgets generally result in the paring back of such outreach activities to focus on the provision of what is known as core services. That's the situation that is particularly relevant for the national institutions that are facing increased financial pressures.

Canberra's national institutions have a clear need for greater investment. However, the ACT government doesn't support the national institutions being required to seek a greater level of private funding to support their corporations, because such a model would require a culture of private philanthropy, which, sadly, simply does not exist in Australia. The ACT government has gladly stepped up to contribute. Since 2011 we have invested $7.1 million in exhibitions hosted by national institutions. We also feel it's important to recognise the interlinked relationship between the national institutions and the local arts organisations and artists here in Canberra. We believe that these relationships facilitate a significantly broader range of programming than the national institutions would be able to achieve on their own. Such collaborations include, for example, ACT arts organisations providing practical workshops that sit alongside the NGA visual art exhibitions or the National Library providing residencies alongside the Folk Festival or the Portrait Gallery's collaborations with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and a high level of engagement between the NGA and the Portrait Gallery with ACT dancers and dance organisations to accompany various exhibitions. Not only do collaborations like this have intrinsic artistic value they also allow the national institutions to contribute to community health and wellbeing.
Suitably supported, the significant opportunities for similar local engagements are there to be replicated by national cultural institutions in touring programs in other local communities across Australia, as well.

Reinvesting the revenue that is generated from activities directly linked to the national institutions is a mechanism that could provide new critical funding to support improvement and to sustain the value of the collective brand of the institutions. We believe that the clearest opportunity in this lies in the area of parking revenue. Paid parking was introduced by the National Capital Authority in 2014, with an estimated revenue on national land of $98.2 million in 2015-16 through to 2017-18. Canberra's institutions do not receive any of the revenue collected, despite the fact that their activities contribute to a significant proportion of the revenue that is generated. So we would suggest that the Australian government reallocate this revenue stream to support the funding and the operations of Canberra's national institutions, and therefore promote a culture of reinvesting revenue generated through associated activities as a positive signal to investors, to sponsors and to philanthropic donors. Specifically, on a matter of governance structures, I'd like to mention Questacon's current position as part of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science rather than as an independent statutory authority. This, we believe, has created a legacy of problems in relation to governance and capacity to develop other income streams, including philanthropic contributions. So the ACT government strongly supports the recommendation of the 2008 Simpson review to transition Questacon to a statutory authority.

More broadly, the impact of the Australian government's efficiency dividend contributes to an increasingly challenging operational environment for Canberra's national institutions, compromising skills retention, long-term planning, creativity, innovation and organisational sustainability. The anticipated $20 million in cuts between 2015 and 2019 that will be absorbed by these institutions is unsustainable and ultimately damaging. Beyond the organisational impact of funding cuts, the impacts on the ACT economy of cuts to the Australian Public Service are keenly felt. Any federal Public Service job cuts have a direct negative impact on Canberra and on the broader region. So the ACT government warmly welcomes this particular inquiry. Continued investment in our shared history is essential to reflect who we are as a nation, both to ourselves and to the rest of the world.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Minister. I very much appreciate the ACT government's submission and your opening statement today. Just a couple of different points from me. From your experience, how do you find your interaction with the institutions on a strategic level, as a whole? Do they engage with the ACT government with a single or consistent voice? Should they or should they not? Or do they engage with you independently? Should they or should they not? Does the interaction between these institutions and the ACT government work from a governance perspective as well? Or are we are we missing out in some way?

**Ms Arthy:** Certainly the engagement that we have with national institutions is not as a collective. At the moment, we're working very closely with Matt Trinca and the National Museum about exactly how we can do it. I think we've all recognised that it's in our collective interest as Canberra to have a united position to put to the visitor economy to attract and retain visitors to Canberra. I'm not aware of why there hasn't been a collective perspective as well? Or are we are we missing out in some way?

**CHAIR:** The acronyms are always remembered before the full name, I've realised.

**Ms Arthy:** All of the tourism operators get together quite regularly to talk about it at an operational level, whereas what we're trying to do, certainly, with Matt Trinca is about how we bring that to a much more strategic discussion.

**CHAIR:** When you say the tourism operators, do you mean the people from the institutions who are responsible for the visitor experience?

**Ms Arthy:** Basically, yes.

**CHAIR:** What I find quite interesting, when we talk to the institutions, is just how much they see their role as collecting and keeping the story in the collection and what percentage of their role they see as displaying and telling the story as well. I suppose the inter-relationship with the ACT government is more around the telling of the story and the visitor experience. Coming back to the organisation that you mentioned—the acronym that I've already forgotten—how does that work, in your mind? Does it work? Is there sufficient coordination between the institutions and the ACT government to maximise the number of visitors to Canberra in order to experience Australia's story through the institutions?

**Ms Arthy:** I think it's important to recognise that that group I mentioned is very operational; it is really looking at coordination of beds. It's that lower-level experience. It's that sort of experience.
CHAIR: Are we lacking something more senior?

Ms Arthy: That's really what the CEO of the National Museum and I are talking about: how do we do that? How do we engage the leaders, the CEOs, of the major tourism and hospitality businesses in Canberra with the national institutions and with us about how we provide that better engagement at our level down the track?

CHAIR: Could you take on notice a further short submission in relation to how you would see that best coming together?

Ms Arthy: Yes.

CHAIR: I think that that's something that the committee would be very interested in. Your government are the hosts of the visitors. I think we'll also find that some institutions don't see their role, necessarily, in the forward-facing telling-Australia's-story experience. The High Court might be one of the more—talk to a little bit more later in this inquiry. I wanted to talk to you a little bit more about in relation to private sector funding, because I heard in your opening statement that you didn't support private sector funding, but then on the issue of Questacon, the location of that entity within the department prevented it from getting some private sector funding to support its activities. I wasn't too sure—maybe I've misheard or misunderstood.

Mr Ramsay: I don't believe it's the case that we have a strong culture of general philanthropy in Australia. Therefore, building up an expectation or a reliance on philanthropic donations is likely to be misplaced. However, that's not to say that we shouldn't be seeking to maximise the opportunity. I think it's the distinction between the opportunity and the reliance. Therefore, Questacon being able to have it so that it opens up the possibility of that broader philanthropic support would be a sound move, but moving away from an assurance of solid government support would be misplaced.

CHAIR: I better understand your point, which aligns with my own view. That is that, where possible, institutions should be seeking to maximise private sector funding and donations to support their work, but an overall reliance on that is—

Mr Ramsay: Misplaced and highly risky.

CHAIR: Yes. Understood. The Enlighten festival, which I found quite fascinating and interesting—I understand funding for that has the decreased over recent years and less and less institutions are being lit up or enlightened. Is that the case?

Ms Arthy: No, I don't think that is the case.

CHAIR: There were previously concerts that were part of the festival that no longer happen to the full extent. There was a concert that went for three days that now is only one day.

Ms Arthy: I think there might be a difference between what the government funded Enlighten festival is and what private companies may do that happen to coexist around that. Certainly, from government funding, I can provide you with the funding over the years—I just don't have it with me—but funding hasn't decreased; it's stayed the same. What we're trying to do is package what were disparate events under the one. So this year, for the first time, we packaged the Canberra Day concert as part of it, and we packaged the Lights! Canberra! Action! and the Night Noodle Markets all as one festival. What we're trying to do is create that whole festival atmosphere for a few weeks and bring Canberra here. It's terrific for us if private event organisers bring other events in, but in terms of that music festival—not being a native Canberran—I actually don't know which one it is, but I think it would be very much private.

Mr Ramsay: The other thing that has happened this year for the first time is the growing of the Enlighten festival into other precincts of the city as well, so growing beyond the national institutions. In terms of projection, there was projection that was taking place at the ANU, growing it into that campus. There are ongoing conversations with the ANU about how it is that we can build and grow that particular festival alongside and working positively with the national institutions, as well as into the major civic area. It's a growing festival.

CHAIR: Do you have any research in relation to the attendance at that festival? Is it a festival for Canberrans or is it something that will draw people to Canberra?

Ms Arthy: Yes, we do have that research. I'm trying to bring it up as we talk.

CHAIR: I'm happy for you to provide that on notice.

Ms Arthy: The majority of visitors to Enlighten at the moment are Canberrans.

CHAIR: I'm not criticising it. I see it as having huge potential.

Ms Arthy: Absolutely, and that's really where we're trying to position it to attract more visitors. Floriade is the one that attracts the external visitors. We want to try and make Enlighten the same. I think, now that we've got the
model of having a package of individual events underneath one umbrella and frankly we've got some ticks under our wing over the last few years, it will grow. So we're happy to provide you with what we know about the attendance. We haven't finished the analysis of this year yet; those numbers are still coming in. We're hoping to see a stronger growth and a stronger growth in external visitors.

**Mr Ramsay:** The Chief Minister has talked publicly a number of times, saying that he would anticipate that with the trajectory of Enlighten's growth at the moment, over time it would become the more significant festival when compared with Floriade.

**Ms Arthy:** And institutions are absolutely critical for us in that.

**CHAIR:** And that's working well?

**Ms Arthy:** It works very well. We work incredibly well with the institutions.

**CHAIR:** And with the NCA on this?

**Ms Arthy:** Yes. We work very closely with the NCA.

**CHAIR:** No issues there?

**Ms Arthy:** Between any organisation putting on huge events, there are always tussles, but the NCA is very good to work with and we can usually work things out.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Thanks very much and well done on a very good submission. In relation to the philanthropic spirit here in Australia, I thought your point was well made in terms of the US as well, which has a very strong tradition of that, but even the Smithsonian, as you say, is two-thirds government funded. So it's a point well made.

I just want to go back to Questacon and the legacy of issues that have arisen as a result of its governance structure. You're recommending it be set up as a statutory authority. Can you talk to us about those legacy issues that have come about as a result of its existing governance structure, and what would you like to see improved?

**Ms Arthy:** It's more around providing Questacon with a bit more of the commercial flexibility to pursue opportunities. Certainly what we witness is that there is a huge demand for Questacon services. A lot of the school groups who come want to go there, a lot of visitors want to go there, and it would be very good if Questacon was able to essentially become a bit more commercial. In terms of the specifics from the previous inquiry through, I would have to go back and provide you with more information around those specifics. But at the more general strategic level it is about very much allowing Questacon to meet the demand that is there, because it is an incredibly popular organisation.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Does that mean increasing the footprint?

**Ms Arthy:** That's a matter for the organisation. In the current environment, where you can do so many things virtually, whether it's a physical or virtual footprint, it's really up to the institution. When you go overseas to look at all the other cultural institutions that are around, like all the different museums, they're doing incredible things but with different technology rather than necessarily physical space. That's the importance of allowing these institutions the freedom to apply their expertise to be able to provide that good telling of the history and provide the visitor experience.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Would you mind coming back to us on the challenges it faces under the current governance arrangements and also what you think would be a worthwhile governance structure.

**Ms Arthy:** It's not really for the ACT government to dictate to the Commonwealth—

**Ms BRODTMANN:** I know, but you made a point on it.

**Ms Arthy:** but we'll expand on the points that have been made.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Okay, great. Thank you. In terms of that international experience, a lot of Australians now are traveling overseas, and so they're full bottle on what they can experience internationally, as are people coming here. Do you think our national institutions are keeping up with the visitor experience that we're now getting in international institutions? We were in Barcelona a few years ago and, because I'm an architecture freak, we did the Gaudi tour of everything. There's one of these houses that he built on a very significant street in Barcelona, and we got the audio experience. I think it was all part of the ticket. It wasn't an added extra; it was all part of the experience. We got it, and we could actually look at what the room looked like—because it's devoid of furniture now—with little fireplaces with fires lit and all that sort of thing. So it really enriched the experience of what really is just a building but an extraordinary building, or an extraordinary house. Given that people are experiencing that sort of depth of integration with each institution, do you think that we're keeping up?
Mr Ramsay: I think the national institutions here are doing a wonderful job within the resources that they have. I think that the museum and institutional experience, as you say, is changing significantly, and the way that people are expecting to engage in institutions changes, and there is engagement through virtual and other forms of exhibition. There is a lot of work that's going on. I know that at the National Museum Mat Trinca has led some significant work in considering that. But I'm not sure that at this stage we have seen the same pace of innovation here that is happening in other parts of the world. Undoubtedly there are significant financial and resourcing restraints on that.

Ms BRODTMANN: That's my concern, and it's not just at one or two institutions; it's a universal high-quality immersive experience, so to speak. That's not an added extra as well. As I said, it's part of the ticket price. A lot of the institutions are free, and so you probably need to have that as an added extra there. But do you? I don't know.

Ms Arthy: Certainly Songlines at the National Museum is getting a lot of credit internationally.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes.

Ms Arthy: I was with the Chief Minister when we went to the Smithsonian, and certainly, when we were talking about what it was, it was generating a lot of interest.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes, the concept is extraordinary.

Ms Arthy: That's right. So the talent and the capability are there.

Ms BRODTMANN: Absolutely.

Ms Arthy: But it is about how to resource it and, as you say, keep up with expectations.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes, because it's changing so rapidly, even in tiny little churches in the middle of nowhere overseas.

Mr Ramsay: Absolutely.

Ms BRODTMANN: I am conscious of time.

CHAIR: We've actually got time.

Ms BRODTMANN: Okay.

CHAIR: I'm going to have another little crack as well.

Ms BRODTMANN: Just going back to working together and the collective approach, now that we've got international flights and we've got international visitors coming in, mainly from Asia but from all over the world, at a rapidly increasing rate, are you working with each of those national institutions—maybe not collectively but individually, because we still have to get to the collective point—in terms of marketing Canberra as a national institution destination?

Ms Arthy: Yes. Within my division I have VisitCanberra, and they work with each of the institutions quite regularly on how to promote the various offerings. There is definitely a lot to be gained by providing it as a collective offering, and that's what our next step is. That's definitely where we want to focus in the next 12 months: how do we really lift Canberra as a cultural destination? That captures all the national institutions, Parliament House and Canberra as a leading home of culture and democracy.

Ms BRODTMANN: Do you have conversations with Washington?

Ms Arthy: That's a very big question, because there are so many elements to Washington.

Ms BRODTMANN: In terms of the way that they market. When you go to Washington, you know the experiences that you're going to have or that you want to have.

Ms Arthy: That's right.

Ms BRODTMANN: And you know the nature of that experience.

Ms Arthy: That's right.

Ms BRODTMANN: I think that's how we should be branding Canberra.

Ms Arthy: I was privileged to go to Washington with the Chief Minister earlier this year, and we spent a lot of time talking to the Mayor of the District of Columbia as well as people within the Smithsonian to find out what makes it work, and whether we could do it on a scale here. It is such a different scale, and that's the thing that we have to work through—given that Washington has a much greater philanthropic culture, and there are many more institutions, is it possible to replicate that here? And that is something that, from the ACT government, we're certainly interested in pursuing. But ultimately it will have to be driven from the national government because it is the national institutions that will need to come together. But it is fascinating to go and look at how they are set up, and it is something that we're certainly interested in working with the national government over.
Ms BRODTMANN: So how are they set up? Do they all work together?

Ms Arthy: They all work under the one institution, so the Smithsonian is actually a collection of different institutions that sit underneath it. I think they have the one—don't quote me—governing body, and everyone reports down underneath that. And they all work together as part of an institutional model. They're not independent, as far as I can remember, but they do work as a collective, and funding comes in, a lot from the federal government, from the state government, as well as the philanthropic.

CHAIR: In relation to the tourism offering with the international flights, could you provide, in addition, on notice, some examples of the tourism marketing that you're doing internationally that features the institutions? If that's the case. That is just out of interest. And also if you've got any research that backs up the idea that it's the institutions that are the drawcard. That would be useful for our report to talk about their importance, now that there's that international tourism element as well. What are the issues that you're facing in Canberra in hosting our visitors? Have the demographics changed? Are you having to provide more caravan parks for RVs? Is the accommodation sufficient to fund the diversity of the different demographics that are visiting?

Ms Arthy: I think if we break it into two markets: one is the schoolchildren market, and one is more the adult domestic or business visitor. The domestic and business tourist and visitor market is adjusting quite well—the market is providing the beds and is providing the infrastructure. Where we have the challenge is around the schoolchildren, because we have 160,000 schoolchildren coming in every year and there's a lot of unmet demand. Having the appropriate facilities to do that is quite challenging. And it's also a case of: we could significantly increase the number of schoolchildren visiting here if we were to look at how the program works with the institutions, because part of our blocker here is just the program requirements—and I don't know the details of the PACER program; there's someone here who does—it is very much around, if we can get more flexibility within the criteria of the PACER program, we can get more children to Canberra to experience the cultural institutions.

CHAIR: I'm very interested in the PACER program and how it's working. Is the person who knows a bit more about it listed to appear a bit later?

Ms Arthy: He's not listed to appear at the moment.

CHAIR: Well, we'll sort that out, and we'll ask him some questions about that program. In relation to accommodation for school students, are you saying that there's a lack of beds at the moment?

Ms Arthy: To cater for the volume coming through, yes. There are some fairly major new developments that have gone in, but—it's the case with everything when it's related to this program, and the popularity of it—they get filled really quickly.

CHAIR: I remember staying at the Macquarie Hotel once, which is no longer here. Where are students staying? And what is coming on now?

Ms Arthy: That question may need to be deferred for Gary. He knows that inside out. A major park has opened up in North Canberra and certainly a lot of people are looking at where else we can open up accommodation that is suitable for schoolchildren.

CHAIR: I've had some engagement with some tourism operators who have suggested that one of the issues that they have in providing tourism offerings to Canberra is a lack of premium product at particular institutions that would allow them to offer something more than a member of the public would experience and, therefore, as part of an additional commission for the additional greater experience at an institution, that would help fund their business. I haven't explained that properly.

Ms Arthy: I understand what you mean.

CHAIR: Could you address that.

Ms Arthy: I'm not sure that I can address it, because it's a matter for the national institutions. It's not something that we would usually enter into.

CHAIR: Do you acknowledge that's an issue?

Ms Arthy: I haven't heard that, certainly not in the time that I've been in my position with the operators. I think the institutions are responding, if you look at Cartier and the packages that are put together for that. I know that the Museum tries to make incredibly good experiences; but, again, it comes to this thing about 'it is answering what clients want.' If there are tourism operators out there that do want the premium package then perhaps that's an element which they should be talking to the institutions themselves about and what sorts of packages could be put together. From an ACT government point of view, I'm certainly not aware of that as a major stumbling block to attracting visitors, but it might be something better placed to the national institutions themselves.
Ms BRODTMANN: You highlight very well the impact of the efficiency dividend and the funding cuts on the national institutions, particularly on the core business in terms of the loss of expertise and the ability to curate, collect and preserve. What do you propose? What are your views on funding? Should we stop the efficiency dividend? Of course, an increase in funding is always welcome. What are your views on how we address this issue?

Mr Ramsay: Certainly I think address the cuts that have been there. The efficiency dividend has really significant impacts on those, and so we would be seeking for that to cease and, as we mentioned, the revenue that would be coming in from the parking would be of significant assistance as well. It's likely to be multiple avenues to achieve the end, but the further cuts that are sitting there, looming, have a significant impact on not only the institutions but the broader community as well as with the number of jobs that have been lost in the ACTU and the impact that has had on the skill set and the community as a whole.

Ms BRODTMANN: In terms of the paid parking issue, it would be good to actually go to the NCA just to get an idea about how much it's raising now. I've got it here. Sorry.

Mr Ramsay: It's $98 million—

Ms BRODTMANN: $98.2 million. That was over the last few years.

Mr Ramsay: That's right.

Ms Arthy: That's just going into consolidated revenue.

Mr Ramsay: It's obviously significant revenue and it would have a significant impact on the institutions themselves if they were to have that additional source of revenue coming in.

CHAIR: Thank you so much for your attendance here today. You have been asked to provide some additional information, and if you could do so by Friday, 6 July, it would be appreciated. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and you will have an opportunity to correct any transcription errors. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

Proceedings suspended from 10:14 to 10:22
AYRES, Dr Marie-Louise, Director-General, National Library of Australia

CARDEW-HALL, Ms Denise, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

COOK, Ms Lyn, Chief Financial Officer, and Director, Finance Branch, National Library of Australia

FRICKER, Mr David, Director-General, National Archives of Australia

LABRUM, Ms Meg, General Manager, Collections and Access, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

MULLER, Mr Jan, Chief Executive Officer, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

PILGRIM, Ms Cathy, Assistant Director-General, Executive Support and Public Programs Division, National Library of Australia

WILLIAMS, Ms Phyllis, Regional Manager, North, National Archives of Australia

CHAIR: I now welcome representatives of the National Library of Australia, the National Archives of Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. Although the committee doesn't require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and, therefore, has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The evidence given today will be recorded by Hansard and attracts parliamentary privilege.

I will invite each of your institutions to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to discussion. The discussion today is roundtable-style. If somebody says something and someone wants to disagree, that is welcome in this building but please indicate you want the call, and I'll ask you to rebut something that you've heard. More than likely, you'll want to reinforce or give a perspective from your institution on something that you've heard as well. This is not the usual parliamentary hearing style, where the deputy chair or I ask a question, we get an answer and then we ask another question. This is a roundtable discussion. We want to hear a variety of views and experiences. If there is a particular topic that we're asking questions on, we may direct it to the table and then see who wants to answer them. We might start with the Archives for a brief opening statement.

Mr Fricker: Thank you for the opportunity to appear at this inquiry. We would like to make very brief statements about some of the unique aspects of the role of the National Archives. I might ask Phyllis if she might provide those opening remarks on behalf of the Archives.

Ms Williams: The National Archives of Australia is the memory of our nation. The stories, images, voices and fingerprints of my mother and father and their families and other families are in the collections of the National Archives of Australia. They are being safeguarded and shared and made accessible for my children and our future generations of Australians. No matter what, we are connected, as is anyone who has a connection to Australia by its people, government, land and our shared histories.

The National Archives collections are in each state and territory, where any Australian can touch, feel and be with the very papers that their family members have touched. For example, last week the National Archives handed over the Larrakia petition to the Larrakia Nation in Darwin. A few years ago my mother saw the petition and, surprisingly, she sat down at the very place that her aunt had put her fingerprint. It was very moving. The documentation of the administration of Indigenous people on settlements and missions, their rations and entitlements, housing, employment, their movement, marriage, eligibility and permissions, the immigration stories, the military service records, the levels and layers of people's histories and our personal stories are documented and in the National Archives of Australia.

Mr Muller: Thank you for the opportunity. This is a very interesting period in time that we're living in at this moment for cultural institutions in general but certainly as an audio-visual archive. We are moving from the analog to the digital domain, which means that, in terms of skills and resources but also expectations from the public, from our users, we need to live up to the expectation that it is all about digital and that we will be able to deal with all the challenges coming from the digital domain at the moment.

We are moving from analog to digital. That means that we will need to digitise our collections as much as possible and as soon as possible, because it's all vulnerable material. That more or less determines our agenda for the coming years, given the fact that the material is vulnerable. Being the only national agency concerned with the visibility, usability and sustainability of audio-visual collections in this country, it makes sense that we need to invest and be able to maintain investing in this digital approach. It's an important starting point. Thank you.
Dr Ayres: Thank you for the opportunity. Certainly, we feel we have much to be proud of in terms of the library's brand, online presence, public engagement and outreach, which address that part of our act which speaks to making the most advantageous use of the collection in the national interest. We were delighted to bring some treasures to Parliament House yesterday, including Cook's journal, as part of our first Library Goes to Parliament.

We welcome half a million visitors to our premises in Canberra every year but we also welcome 30 million online visitors. For every person who walks in our front door down the road, 60 are walking through our digital front door. We're touching the lives of Australians everywhere using multiple channels, including Trove, which is not just about the 22 million pages of digitised newspaper content but also the voices of so many Australians, through our oral history collection—for example, the voices of many of those who were separated from their families as part of the stolen generation. We also offer niche digital products such as our Digital Classroom, which is reaching 60,000 a year.

As our submission noted, though, these activities are only one part of what we do. The majority of our financial, human and intellectual resources are dedicated to our core functions of developing and maintaining a national collection. I want to note that we're also digital leaders in this space. We were the first national library in the world to collect websites. More than 30 per cent of our annual Australian published intake is now collected in digital form. We collect at scale. Recently we had a single acquisition from the Queensland topographic service of 7,000 digital maps that were acquired in one big digital gulp and processed all the way through our systems to accessibility to the public almost immediately. We collect very large personal and organisational archives, and they can also be in digital form. So our digital operation in terms of collecting is enormous, and we're doing this at the same time as our physical collection continues to grow.

Our physical collections grow by 2½ linear kilometres a year, and we have exhausted all possibilities for further compacting collections in our buildings. By June 2020 we will be in dire need of new storage and haven't yet identified an affordable solution. Our digital collections are growing much faster, by around 15 per cent a year, requiring constant reinvestment in storage, digital infrastructure and, of course, cybersecurity measures. We are very efficient at this. We've just costed what it would look like if we were doing this in the cloud. At the moment it would cost us two to three times as much to move to the cloud, so we do this very efficiently in house.

We're also digital leaders in the collaborative space, and I think this is something that's unique about the National Library. We have nearly 40 years experience in leading collaborative digital endeavours across Australia. We have very effective Commonwealth-state relations with our state and territory libraries. We collaborate on a shared web archiving service, an efficient centralised newspaper digitisation service and, by next year, a single national service for collecting all Australian digital publications and ensuring that they are looked after in one place but accessible in all of the states.

Those endeavours are not cost free, and, at the moment, the gap between what we recover on those national endeavours through membership fees and what is actually required to deliver them is very significant. So our challenges for the future will be about storage for our physical collection, storage for our digital collections, maintaining our national collaborative services and maintaining our outreach to the Australian people. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you all. I'd like to start off not by looking at the individual institutions but by asking a few questions that may sound very naive and offensive. But it's important that I ask them to get them on Hansard for our report. I think it will be a good basis for arguing the importance of the role that the institutions play in our nation. I'll ask a couple of questions—not about your individual institutions but from a wider perspective—just to start the discussion. Why are the institutions important? Does it matter if they're there or not? What do they do? Why are they strategically important to a cohesive Australia? What role do the institutions play in relation to more Australians learning from, understanding, experiencing and appreciating the story of Australian history and culture? Are we getting that message to enough Australians? What is the risk of us not getting that message?

Mr Fricker: Internationally, we're seeing across Western democracies an erosion of trust in public institutions—in the traditional institutions of democracy and of government.

We're also seeing on a huge scale displacement of people and displacement of people from their culture, from their cultural identity. This is creating incredible tensions and fragmentations and is disturbing the fabric of society. Every nation needs economic prosperity and we need to build wealth and opportunity across nations. But, if you want to have a resilient and strong society, you need a cultural prosperity. People need to feel a sense of belonging, they need to understand why and how they got to be where they are today and they need to be able to associate themselves with the future of their country.
Deputy Chair, I've heard you speak many times about big issues facing Australia, such as foreign interference and foreign influence and the need to have a more resilient society that can be confident about itself and can withstand those adverse effects of foreign influence. I just think cultural strength, a cultural prosperity, and citizens and residents of Australia being confident about where they are, knowing the things they're proud of in their history and knowing the things they don't like their history, but having a channel to correct the other things they don't like and to celebrate the things they do like, comes from a strong cultural identity. That's what all of the institutions in front of you today are about—building a cultural prosperity and that confidence in our nation's identity and that sense of belonging. All of that adds up to more confident and more responsibility for a better future.

Dr Ayres: I would agree with that, David. I think the confidence to have many, many stories as part of Australian identity is important. Phyllis has spoken this morning about her family identity being held in the records of the National Archives. Certainly within all of our collections—because we all hold the memory of Australia and we all tell the stories—the confidence to have many stories being told rather than a single story is incredibly important, particularly in the digital age. Giving every Australian the opportunity to connect their story with their community story with their national story is, I see, only able to strengthen that sense of cultural prosperity and effective citizenship.

Mr Muller: I agree. We're all keeping memories alive. That's our basic rule. The history of a country—our media history and cultural history—can only be told by the records that are used or preserved. So the preservation and sharing of what has been preserved is our main task, which means that together we tell the whole story. That's what we should do, and that's what we do in partnership as much as possible.

CHAIR: Is it fair to say that, as a result of their visitation, a citizen who visits your institutions in person or online, can become a better and more engaged citizen?

Dr Ayres: Absolutely.

CHAIR: What's the risk if they don't or they don't have the opportunity?

Dr Ayres: I think we see the sense of disengagement from our complex national story. As David has said, with the erosion of trust in public institutions and that sense of national identity, I think there is a risk there. We're all about building on the strengths of the Australian story rather than focusing on the kinds of risks. We're all about building a sense of cultural prosperity and identity across the board.

Mr Fricker: If people can't come to us, they're going to go to some stupid Twitter account or something. Something I heard about yesterday is the pen not paper campaign on social media, which is just creating this idea—

CHAIR: A pen not paper campaign on social media?

Mr Fricker: Yes. It is creating this idea that, because ballot papers are filled in with a pencil, your votes are being rubbed out and somebody else is—

Ms BRODTMANN: Some crazy conspiracy!

Mr Fricker: Exactly. If we're not available for people to come to to understand what Australian democracy is and how Australian society works, where are they going to go to get some authentic and reliable information? If they can't come to us, they're going to turn to sources such as inauthentic ones, perhaps deliberately promoted by actors without the interests of Australia at heart—people that are just broadcasting these ridiculous ideas. So I think it's essential that people have trusted institutions that they can turn to in a very friendly and engaging way and that are right there where they want them to be so they can access something which is not fake news. We are the antidote to fake news.

Mr Muller: It's interesting that you said that, because it's not just the preservation of historical records to be the trusted repository that we all have and that we share together. This example is exactly what needs to be preserved in the future as well. So we need to think about what is our future heritage, and there is a role for us as well. It's not just the preservation of history. If you ask us what would happen to the country without that preservation, it would probably be like being a country with Alzheimer's, because we tend to forget what we are if we don't preserve our records. But there is also an obligation towards the future. That means that we're all collaboratively thinking about what the heritage of the future would be and how it will be preserved but also how it will be used by future generations and how much sense it makes, for example, to keep these Twitter records as well. It's an interesting discussion.

Ms Labrum: Just to add a slightly different perspective on top of what everybody was saying, if you're talking about the experience of people seeing, feeling and understanding what's in one of these collections or all
of them, there is also the magic aspect, which is that it's not just about learning or becoming a better person or understanding the history but also about responding emotionally and creatively. The whole question is about whether or not what we are helping to release back to the public is an artistic experience or is a challenging or scary one from the past or the present. But it's about being able to open it up so people can actually respond as and how they wish. I do think magic is one of the most important points. It's not in any of our mission statements, but it's fundamental.

Mr Muller: Yes, that's right.

Dr Ayres: Picking up on that point, we find that the Australian public who are using our digital services are incredibly generous in sharing that magic with us. So I believe that. Just going back to the idea of what needs to be preserved for the future, this is why the National Library started collecting websites 22 years ago. This week we've just received the 2018 snapshot of the entire Australian web domain, and of course this is a form of heritage. If we hadn't started doing this, the last 20 years of history would be gone. So I think that we are always forward thinking. The public may not have realised why it was important for us to start archiving websites in 1996. I think it's a lot more obvious now why that is important and why it is important for that to be accessible.

CHAIR: It's a very important tool in my domain for when people change things over time as well.

Dr Ayres: They do, particularly in the political domain. You're quite correct. There are a lot of changes around elections, and we capture those.

CHAIR: It's very useful. In relation to the importance of telling a story, you've helped me to get the evidence I need in relation to that. Are there elements of the Australian community that are not visiting the institutions in person or online, whether it's male, female, old, young, new Australian, people who have been born Australian, or people from WA as opposed to people from Sydney? Is there a gap there of people who we're not reaching and who we need to reach? What is the consequence of not reaching them?

Dr Ayres: If I may speak to that, we're very conscious of this. We're extremely proud of the fact that we actually reach the Australian population, in terms of geographic distribution, almost in exact proportion to where people live in cities, towns, regions and remote areas. However, there isn't any doubt that we feel that we can do much more to reach Indigenous communities and multicultural communities, and I think we need to talk about the number of communities that there are. But this is really all about collections, too. If people don't see themselves in our collections, then we actually don't have anything for them. So it's really important that we are collecting from those communities, or, if we have material in our collections, that we bring that to the surface. So, for us for the next two or three years it's all about bringing our Indigenous material to the surface—especially next year with the International Year of Indigenous Languages, we're focusing on making sure that what we have is more visible. If you don't have collections that relate to the community, then you are not really serving the whole community at all. It's not just about who visits; it's about the whole spectrum of what we do.

Ms Williams: With collections, it's also really important to engage with communities directly and to inform communities what we have in our collections. The National Archives does that with Aboriginal advisory groups in the Northern Territory, with reach to remote communities, and also in Central Australia as well. But we do appreciate that there's still a level of work to do in that area.

Mr Muller: On that note, at the risk of focusing on the NFSA here, and you probably want to have an overall approach—

CHAIR: No, I'm happy to start delving into particular issues. But before we do start looking at the individual challenges you have, with this issue of bringing your collection to the surface, the reason we've got you together today is that you have a collecting/archiving responsibility and a public display responsibility. Do you find that legislation requires you to focus on the collection in some regards, and that may then mean that you can do less of the public display? What are the percentages, and how do you manage those decisions between those two distinct roles?

Dr Ayres: With difficulty, is the answer. I think we probably all make slightly different decisions. With the library's decision, for example, to focus early and heavily on investing in digital, we actually did make decisions: we don't tour exhibitions anymore, although we partner with others who do. We're not part of the PACER program, so we have fewer children coming into the building, but we reach out digitally. It's not always a case of just saying you're going to do less of this and more of that. It might also be that you focus your resources on reaching different communities in different ways. But, in terms of the balance of our responsibilities, we have absolute responsibilities to collect for the long term, and if that means that in the short term we need to wind back on our outreach activities, as CEO, I would do that.
Mr Muller: In our mission statement we say the NFSA collects, preserves and shares. The focus for now, in the short term, will be preservation—digital preservation, mainly. Again, we're dealing with audiovisual collections, which means pretty young material—literally young material—from the fifties, sixties and seventies, which means that when it comes to sharing the material there is still copyright in place. So, in terms of reaching out to communities, users, visitors and so on, it's sometimes difficult to do what you want to do, because copyright is in place and that means a lot of hurdles to be able to share the material. When it comes to the preservation, that's really urgent. Again, it's filmable material. The knowledge around it, to be able to digitise material, is filmable, literally, because it's dying. People who used to work with machinery that we have in place are literally dying, as well. So it's the machinery and the hardware, it's the knowledge and it's the material that's filmable. That's why we define Deadline 2025, which means before 2025 we need to have digitised our entire collection, especially the very vulnerable part of magnetic tapes.

Mr Fricker: From our point of view, we work hand in glove on the 2025 issue, so I won't cover that ground again, and there is the digital preservation that Marie-Louise has talked about as well. Our enabling legislation predates the internet. Documentary heritage being created today looks nothing like documentary heritage that was being created back in the 1970s. We do make a lot of choices between preserving government records—working upstream—and preserving those records and making them accessible. The accessibility does suffer at times.

We're the institute that gets taken to court all the time, so I'm always before a tribunal or a court defending decisions on why we haven't released records yet. There's a resource issue there, because we have to declassify ASIO, ASIS and sensitive intelligence records. We have a legal obligation to do that. We are a pro disclosure organisation. These are public records; they should be in the public. We want to release all we can and protect only what we must. That legislative obligation, the mandate that we have, does rub up against our capacity to run public programs and make the documentary heritage available. It certainly is the case.

CHAIR: In summary: in times of financial constraint, you revert back to the core focus of keeping the collection, and that puts at risk your ability to tell the Australian story?

Mr Fricker: To lose the collection is irreversible. You have to preserve the irreplaceable. Yes, you can defer a decision about access or a program, but you cannot reverse a permanent loss.

CHAIR: One of the things that has occurred to me during our discussion is the triangle, this national capital area. I think about your ability to bring your collections to the surface. Then I thought about the International Year of Indigenous Languages, which is next year, of which all of your institutions would have elements that would contribute to a good exhibition in relation to that particular issue. Is there a need for a generic national exhibition space in the triangle or in central Canberra that can be funded, utilized and staffed either for one of your institutions to do something special for a couple of months or for your institutions collectively to do an exhibition on a particular issue? Am I the first to have this idea? I doubt it. Has it been discussed? What are the views?

Dr Ayres: We do exhibitions at the National Library, although I stress again: we are not a museum or a gallery; it's actually a small part of what we do. My first reaction is that what you would lose if you did that is the intimate connection to the collections from which exhibitions are drawn. We all share collections for exhibition purposes, but there's a certain character that goes along with how you present an exhibition. As a Canberran, I can't speak for visitors to Canberra, but the opportunity to visit a number of our institutions and see exhibitions that may or may not speak to each other in quite surprising ways—personally, I think that's more dynamic than the thought of having a generic space. In the digital arena, having a single, more generic space such as Trove does make sense, simply because of the infrastructure requirements to do that. In the physical space—

CHAIR: To be clear, I wasn't suggesting that a generic space would reduce, remove or replace the existing spaces; it would allow some exhibitions to occur in addition to what was already occurring.

Mr Fricker: I think it would turn out to be a cost-cutting measure. I think that Australia's collection would be diminished. Our heritage is too big. I really would feel sad if we thought that Australia's heritage could be compressed and put into a general purpose, one-stop shop for Australian heritage. I think that Australians generally and visitors to Canberra would miss out on an awful lot if, just by happenstance, when they visited Canberra, they had the opportunity to see one particular slice of our cultural heritage but, because they arrived on that Sunday afternoon, missed out on the other 99 per cent. We've got so much to share with people and to engage with. I think the idea of having a timeshare arrangement for Australian heritage would really diminish our national identity.

CHAIR: Thank you for the discussion so far. We'll go into some of those individual issues. I don't suspect that this will be the last time we hear from any of you throughout this inquiry.
Ms BRODTMANN: Before I go into some general questions, Mr Fricker, I want to pursue the issue of the court cases or the tribunal. How much time is devoted to that? How many resources? You can take this on notice. Now that you've highlighted it and we've had a chance to reflect on it, I imagine that that would take up an enormous amount of resources. It's taking up so many resources that you are having to juggle and balance and work out what you're going to be focusing on. My concern is that it's challenging you to work out what you should be focusing on. Can we get some indication of how much of your time and the Archive's time is spent on that? I didn't have an appreciation of that, and I don't know whether the Chair did. I think that the broader community would be interested in that, too. Of course, there is that legislative responsibility, and we understand that, but does that legislative responsibility require devoted resources?

Mr Fricker: It does. Everyone across the Archives is engaged with the declassification of documents at some level, but we have a core team of about 15 or so staff who are working full time on examining and releasing documents that were previously classified. We're often in court because we can't complete that examination within the statutory period of 90 days. In terms of legal costs, it's hundreds of thousands of dollars. In terms of person costs defending court cases, it might be—I will get back to you on that with a more precise answer.

Ms BRODTMANN: And an idea about the legal costs as well. Do you have a line item specifically for that, or is that out of your general budget?

Mr Fricker: Everything's out of a general budget, of course. It's hundreds of thousands of dollars—that's the sort of scale per year in legal fees to defend the Commonwealth's position in the courts. The thing is, the resources we need are to release the documents. I don't wish to present the idea that somehow we're putting up a legal wall or a paywall behind the records that we're releasing; it is a case of the time and the resources it takes to get those records released. People are engaged in scholarships and are doing some sort of research, or maybe they're mums and dads looking through their family history. We want to get those records out as quickly as possible. That does challenge us on the resourcing front. When we miss our deadlines, we can be taken to a tribunal or a court. I can get back to you with more specific figures on that, but for today's purposes it's hundreds of thousands in legal fees. We would have about 15 or so people engaged in declassification.

Ms BRODTMANN: It would be useful for us to get an understanding of that: the percentage of your team devoted to this and the percentage of your budget that is devoted to it.

Mr Fricker: I'd be delighted to do that. Again, the important part of what we're all talking about today, in terms of connecting this work that's done by ASIO, by foreign intelligence agencies et cetera—it all constitutes documentary heritage. Over the passage of time, these documents should be released to the public. It is a function that we provide here. This is the only way that Australians can access these documents. You can't get these through FOI.

Ms BRODTMANN: Exactly. That's my point.

Mr Fricker: It's only through our heritage institutions that Australians can access this information which forms part of the history. It lets people understand what the government's done in their names and what these agencies have done in their names. It's a very important part of what we do. I'd be delighted to talk to that on notice.

Ms BRODTMANN: You are out there and you want this information out there—that is your role. I do understand that. I think we'd all appreciate getting an idea about how much of your budget that consumes. More broadly, we've read your submissions and noticed that for the NFSA and the Archives the budget is actually decreasing this financial year. From all of you—we can start with the Library—what are the challenges you're facing at the moment? You've talked about the Harry White fellowship.

Dr Ayres: The research fellowships—I believe that that's a challenge we've actually met. We used to be able to fund those from our budget. We had to stop. But in fact that's such a compelling proposition that we have been able to raise private sector funding for that, including a very generous gift of a million dollars yesterday from our outgoing chair, Ryan Stokes, to support fellowship over 10 years.

Ms BRODTMANN: If we could just go more broadly.

Dr Ayres: The challenges remain. The application of the efficiency dividend for cultural institutions that have growing collections is extremely problematic. We are all tasked with growing our collections, not with making them smaller, and as we need to move into the digital space and maintain our physical collecting and collections that is certainly a challenge for us. For those institutions within the Communications and the Arts portfolio the additional saving of three per cent that was announced at the 2015 MYEFO—I'm not sure about colleagues, but that takes $1.5 million a year out of our budget, and that is ongoing. So the application of efficiency dividends is difficult for us at the moment.
Ms BRODTMANN: That three per cent was specifically for the department and that flowed onto all the institutions that fell under that.

Dr Ayres: It was across the cultural institutions in addition to the APS-wide efficiency dividend. I do need to say that of course we have short-term modernisation funding of $16.4 million, which allows us to get on with the job of making Trove better, but of course that comes to an end in 2020. So more generically for our institution, and I suspect for some others, increasingly lumpy budgets present a challenge to us. Whether it's additional government funding or additional private sector funding, it's not as smooth as it used to be, and certainly our organisation is needing to learn to work with that. I think another challenge for us certainly is the application of the ASL caps. When you have new money coming in, either government or private, but you cannot increase the number of your employees—even non-ongoing—that actually does pose some really significant challenges, especially if like us you're running long-term infrastructure that members are paying you fees for. They expect long-term staff who know what they're doing, not short-term contractors. So there are a number of issues, I suppose.

CHAIR: It's almost a disincentive. There's no point in getting private sector funding if you're subject to the cap.

Dr Ayres: It makes it quite difficult. That's right.

CHAIR: If there was something that allowed you to remove yourself in some part from the burden of those caps, as a result of the private sector funding, it would make more sense.

Dr Ayres: At least for new funding that comes in, where it's not government funding, that would be quite helpful.

Ms BRODTMANN: This is government funding you're talking, so you get a new budget—

Dr Ayres: No. I'm talking about private sector funding and third-party organisations. The majority of our own-source revenue comes from other organisations around the country who pay us to participate in our digital services.

CHAIR: But you can't spend it, because you're still capped in relation to your staff.

Dr Ayres: This is the challenge; it's a real challenge. So I'd say that the challenges are the growing collections and diminishing resources: our cash revenue from government is five per cent lower than it was in 2009-10 and our staffing is 16 per cent lower than it was at the same period. There is no way that this is not a challenge. I think I would also say that there comes a point where efficiency dividends stop creativity and they stop innovation. We've had to say no to so many exciting digital opportunities that could have changed things for the Australian public because we simply couldn't do it. Frankly, I'd be happy for any part of our business to be benchmarked against any national or international standard, and I would be confident that we're as efficient as they come. So it's that broad-brush approach to efficiency dividends that doesn't sit well with small agencies that have growing collections.

CHAIR: Are there any institutions that weren't affected?

Dr Ayres: Not as far as I know. All the APS agencies are subject to the efficiency dividend. The additional three per cent cut was—

CHAIR: The CSIRO wasn't, but the Australian Antarctic Division was, for example. It was because of where you sat within or outside departments.

Dr Ayres: Yes.

Mr Muller: These are institutions dealing with growing collections, as you say, and there is also, again, the digitisation of all the collections.

Dr Ayres: Yes.

Mr Muller: That means you need to be able to invest, and that is hard in times of efficiency dividends and decreasing budgets.

Dr Ayres: I was just going to say that, in the digital world, that investment brings new responsibilities. We're a big digital shop. We estimate that probably 15 per cent of the IT spend for modernisation will be to meet compliance and to meet our cybersecurity obligations, and they're going up. They're not going to stop, and they require constant investment. These are things that 10 years ago we might not have been so concerned about. We certainly are now.

Ms BRODTMANN: Good point. Mr Muller, what are some challenges?
Mr Muller: Digitisation, as I said before, because our material is vulnerable, so we need to invest in digitisation. The other challenge will be our home. You were referring to architecture. We live in a beautiful building. There probably was an architecture crisis in the thirties, but it is, indeed, literally from 1934. It's never been built as an archive or a visitor destination; it's been built as the Australian Institute of Anatomy. It used to be a morgue, literally—which in a way is an archive as well, for dead bodies. Nevertheless, it's not fit for purpose. Given our challenges in the digital domain and our challenges in order to be visible and useful but also sustainable, we need a place where we can sustain our archives, especially digital archives, which are totally different from analog archiving. It comes with other obligations and challenges. It comes with other budgets, resources and skills. We need to be able to invest in that before it's too late. Coming with that is our new home. Our preferred new home should be a visitor destination, because we strongly believe that an archive should be as open as possible. People can get access to the archive not only by browsing through the collections via the internet but also by literally engaging with it in a physical place—in an exhibition, for example. So these are the challenges we're facing in the short and medium term.

Ms BRODTMANN: What sort of impact is the decreasing budget having?

Mr Muller: Pretty huge, actually. Financially we're healthy, thanks to our CFO. We face challenges in terms of our obligations in our KPIs and the goals that we've set. The fact that our budgets are decreasing means that we need to choose what to do. If we focus on digitisation—which is necessary, again, because it's urgent, and before it's too late we need to digitise our collections—it means that we can't do other things.

CHAIR: What are those other things?

Mr Muller: For example, for the film industry, we digitally restore old Australian films, cultural heritage, which costs a lot of money. That's something that we can't do at this moment, for example. Our film history, our film heritage, is vulnerable in that respect as well. So these are the things we need to choose.

Another example is to reach out to our visitors and users by means of exhibitions. That will be difficult too. We will do an exhibition in August. We will open an exhibition on 10 August about Heath Ledger. That's another issue. Obviously there is not enough money to create our own exhibitions. I'm not saying that it's not possible to do it, because I think that's an important thing for today as well. We should do things in collaboration much more. So, to reach our goals and to be visible as an archive, we collaborate, in this case, with the Western Australian Museum in Perth and bring their exhibition to Canberra, to the other side of the country, in order to engage new audiences, younger people, with that exhibition, which makes sense. So there is a way to do it, but it's probably not ideal and, again, given the fact that we need to invest more and more in digitisation and also in digital preservation and the storage of these two assets, it will probably mean that all the other things will be hard to accomplish.

Mr Fricker: Again, there's a lot of commonality here. With us, the effect of the efficiency dividend is, of course, that you can only absorb that through those discretionary expenses that you have. At the National Archives we have 13 properties across Australia, and 40 per cent of our budget goes to property operating expenses. I can't take the efficiency dividend and tell our landlords that I'm not going to pay rent anymore or I'm not going to pay electricity or air conditioning. That's why I need new legislation.

Ms BRODTMANN: We will come to that, because I think that's important.

Mr Fricker: Because of that very high proportion of property operating expenses that we have, it has a disproportionate effect on our programs in our discretionary activities. I agree with what my colleagues have been saying: we're losing records that should be preserved at the moment because we can't invest in a digital capability to the extent that we should be; we can't drive our programs throughout the Commonwealth to make sure that the documentary heritage that should flow from government activity is flowing into our collection. Of course, it means that right across the board we have to tweak and reduce everything we do because we are still preserving money to invest in a digital future; we're not sitting on our hands on that front. We've upped our fees for discretionary services that we provide. Of course, the public were not happy about that. It now might cost in the order of $200 to get copies of government records made, where in the past it was very cheap.

Ms BRODTMANN: How cheap?

Mr Fricker: It used to be $28 to get a copy of a file made up, but we just couldn't absorb that, because the real cost is $228. So we've had to reflect actual costs to be able to sustain those services. As Mr Muller and Dr Ayres have said, we do collaborate. We collaborate on preservation capability, hosting touring exhibitions and these sorts of things. But, yes, if the dividends come in, we have to make those savings. But we have to maintain expenses on those nondiscretionary items. We have to invest in the future, because we can't go backwards. So, of course, that little bit at the end—the programs that we can run—is affected.
Ms Williams: I just wanted to clarify something, Chair. You looked surprised when the director-general mentioned the cost of a file and the difference between the previous charge and what is being charged now. That $28 was at the lower end.

CHAIR: What do you mean by a file?

Ms Williams: An administrative file that is produced by a Commonwealth agency which is now with the National Archives. These can vary from a page up to 250 pages per file. One to 20 pages was $28, and then the scale would increase proportionate to the number of pages on the file.

CHAIR: So you charge individual departments that?

Mr Fricker: I don't want to take up all the time we have. Everyone is entitled to free access to a record, but most people would like a copy of the record, either digitally or, indeed, in hard copy. Even to make and deliver a digital copy of that record to them, because maybe they live in Broome and the record is in Canberra, requires us to digitise it.

CHAIR: These are changes to the—

Mr Fricker: These are value-added charges, and that's where it hurts the public services—you're quite right—and I'm happy to come back with the precise fee schedules.

Ms BRODTMANN: That would be useful.

Mr Fricker: But my point is: the public noticed there was a step change in the fee structure.

Dr Ayres: And it directly affects access. As soon as you increase charges to individuals, you'll see an immediate reduction, particularly from people from more remote parts of Australia when they're trying to get something that is part of your collection.

CHAIR: We don't keep collections so no-one can see them.

Dr Ayres: No, that's right.

Ms BRODTMANN: Actually when you're getting those stats, could you advise us whether there has been an impact in terms of this access issue—and I know that it's in a way apples and oranges—in term of a reduction in people requesting those files?

Mr Fricker: Yes.

Dr Ayres: There are also the future choices we might have to make, though, as far as budgets get tighter. As a library, we are the largest net lender under interlibrary loans—so we lend our collection through other libraries—but the standard fee for an interlibrary loan doesn't come anywhere near covering the actual cost of doing that. So we're looking now at what the gap is between the cost of providing that service and what we're recovering. I know that in the next couple of years we'll have to make very unpalatable decisions around closing that gap in order to maintain our other operations.

Ms BRODTMANN: I just want to go back to your submission and that gentleman who linked up five million people? Was his name Warren?

Dr Ayres: Mr Warren is an extraordinary—

Ms BRODTMANN: Has that man been nominated for an award?

Dr Ayres: Yes, he has.

Ms BRODTMANN: What a legend!

Dr Ayres: He is a legend. I guess this is a way in which the Australian public show how passionate they are about Australian history and identity. The fact that they are willing to put this much time into creating and adding their own knowledge into a national service, to me, remains absolutely miraculous—that people will continue to do this. I have no doubt that, if we had more of our resources digitised, we would see this grow and we would see different kinds of interaction. So I don't think we should underestimate the Australian community's hunger for the collective heritage that we represent and their willingness to participate actively in that to make a better Australia. One of the greatest things about working in these institutions is that people want to be part of that story.

Ms BRODTMANN: In your submission you said that you conducted a strategic fundraising review.

Dr Ayres: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: And you expect to implement the recommendations over the next financial year.

Dr Ayres: Yes. Our fundraising over the last 10 years, first off, was for capital for our Treasures Gallery and then the majority of it over the last several years has been seeking corporate funding to support our major international exhibitions—so Mapping our World and Celestial Empire—where you are really looking for the...
underwriting of major international exhibitions. It was clear to us, even with Celestial Empire and to our Council that the corporate world was stepping away from that, and even more clear with our upcoming Cook exhibition, which we spent three years trying to raise corporate funds and were basically unsuccessful. And we know how to do this. They are not going to fund these exhibitions—

CHAIR: Why?

Dr Ayres: They are no longer engaged in wanting to support single exhibitions that occur in Canberra that are bound by time. They're moving their investment into things like scholarships for Indigenous students and increasing the number of women engineers in Australia. So they're looking to long-term relationships. So we have decided that we are no longer going to do that. So our Cook exhibition, which I'm glad to say is being funded now through additional funding from the budget, will be the last international exhibition we do for the foreseeable future.

We are shifting all of our fundraising and philanthropy effort into increasing digitisation of our collections, and we anticipate that our focus will be more on individuals rather than corporate Australia. So it's a huge shift for us, and we've committed to trying to raise three times as much money over the next five to seven years. It requires a major cultural shift inside the organisation. I do want to stress, though, that this is about increasing access to the collection. It does not help us with our core functions of developing, maintaining and preserving a collection for the future. So that was the finding. We've done well, we need to change and we need to professionalise. Australia is about 20 years behind even the UK in terms of professionalisation of philanthropy. We have a capability issue that we will need to address.

Ms BRODTMANN: Where are we on the US?

Dr Ayres: We don't even bother with looking, we're so far after them. I suppose the other thing—

CHAIR: We're getting better though, aren't we?

Dr Ayres: I think we're getting better. If we're trying to raise our own capability we need to think about what government might need to do to help us to enable that as well.

CHAIR: What would we do?

Dr Ayres: One thing that's come to our attention recently is that there are really strict rules about what we're allowed to do with funds that have been given to us privately. Whether they're held in our own funds or we set up a separate foundation, we're restricted to really earning not much above cash rates, whereas, in the states, for example, there are state investment vehicles that are getting probably three times as much as we can earn on our money, so I'd love to see attention to that. The other thing that would be really helpful would be—again in the states—if we think about what we've seen with State Library of Victoria with their major redevelopment of their building, where there was government funding that was matching private sector funding. We would love to see, particularly for digitisation, a situation in which we could go to a donor and say, 'We would like you to give this much to digitise the papers of Sir Robert Menzies, and government will match you.' So some kind of matching arrangement, which is certainly the case in the UK and other jurisdictions, would be helpful.

CHAIR: If the government is encouraging you to seek private funding, a bit of carrot in relation to things like the ASL caps and matching funding would help you achieve those goals.

Dr Ayres: Carrot would be lovely.

Ms BRODTMANN: Going back to those rules, are they the rules for those agencies that come under the department of communications or is it—

Dr Ayres: No. It's more general rules from the Department of Finance.

Ms BRODTMANN: It's under PGPA?

Dr Ayres: Yes.

Ms Cardew-Hall: We can't invest money.

Dr Ayres: All we can do is put cash on deposit.

Ms BRODTMANN: I'm on the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, so I was there at the birth of PGPA, which was difficult.

Dr Ayres: None of us want to place the gifts of our donors at risk, but, for example, with our chair yesterday giving a million dollars when he knows that I can basically earn cash rates on it, it's not really what his intention was. I'd like to see that change.

Ms BRODTMANN: Going back to the legislation and the acts under which you operate, are they constraining you in any way? Are there any suggestions on what needs to be improved?
Mr Fricker: Our submission identifies this. As I mentioned earlier, our legislation predates the internet. We're in the information business at the Archives, of course, and a lot's happened to the information business since 1978. It goes to how information should be managed and these sorts of things. But to go to some of the issues we've just been talking about, the legislation is not entirely clear. It could be clarified and improved to allow us to raise revenue within proper ethical frameworks. As I say, I never want the Archives to put up a pay wall between public records and the public—that's not what the institution is about—but we should have more capacity to provide value added services and to strike a fair fee or charge for services. Our current legislation makes that very difficult. It's not impossible, but it's very difficult.

Ms BRODTMANN: How did you arrive at the $200 figure, the $28 and then the $200. How did you arrive at that increase?

Mr Fricker: It was quite a forensic examination of what it took—forgetting about the cost of preserving the records for the past hundred years—to locate, to retrieve, to disassemble what could be a delicate file, to put it carefully through a digitisation process, to reassemble the file and to preserve the record. It is really a cost recovery. We are not making profit, and we are probably still not covering all costs in fact. So it's the actual cost of providing that service.

Mr Muller: In terms of legal issues, I would say copyright is an issue for us in order to be able to share our collections with visitors, users and so on, because it's under copyright. The Copyright Act dates back to 1968, a long, long time before the internet came up, let alone digital. There is obviously a need for modernisation here and at least a way for cultural institutions to be able to share that material with our public without any commercial meaning, simply because we need to share the material that we digitise and that we hold in our collections.

Another thing is that it would be very useful if there were a legal deposit, meaning that all the makers would bring at least one copy of what they make, whether it's broadcasters, the film industry or whatever, to the audiovisual archive. For transparency reasons, it's a very transparent way of dealing with audiovisual artists in the country. At least it's known to all the makers that there is one place where all that material can go to, without discussing copyright issues. That's still another discussion, but at least there is this deposit for all the audiovisual material.

CHAIR: So there's no legal requirement at the moment to make that deposit?

Mr Muller: There have been discussions going on for a couple of years now, I think.

Ms Labrum: Decades.

Mr Muller: Decades, I hear. There is one great example in Europe, in France, where the Institut national de l'audiovisuel is dealing with a legal deposit. Again, it is a very transparent solution. Everyone knows that is the place where the audiovisual collection is held and where digitisation takes place. From there, there is sharing with the users.

CHAIR: Would there be an efficiency benefit to your organisation if that were in place?

Mr Muller: Yes, for sure—again, because of transparency and because of the fact that you know exactly what type of work flows you need to have in place to be able to deal with that legal deposit, but also, again, for clarity for the users and for re-use especially. What we saw in France, in Paris, is that, given the fact that there has been a legal deposit in place for years already, the re-use of that material is growing exponentially, because it's very clear where you get material from.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes, a one-stop shop.

Mr Muller: Exactly.

Ms BRODTMANN: How long have the French had this system in place.

Mr Muller: A long time, since the sixties or seventies.

Ms BRODTMANN: Is that also the case across Europe?

Mr Muller: No. In the Netherlands they're still struggling with that as well. But the French are an example. Within the EU there is a discussion about the copyright and also things like legal deposits, and this is the example of how to manage an archive like that.

Ms BRODTMANN: Great. Thank you.

Dr Ayres: We operate under two acts. The National Library Act 1960 still meets our needs perfectly. It's crystal clear. In fact, in difficult times, such as in 2015 with the additional cut to budget, when we feel we've got our back to the wall, we go back and look at our act and do what it says to do. So it's terrific.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes, it gives you the direction.
Dr Ayres: It does, yes. We also operate, though, under the Copyright Act, which is where the legal deposit provisions are for the National Library, so a copy of every Australian publication has to be deposited with us. Talking about time, it took us 23 years of advocacy to get the changes made so that we had the right to collect born-digital publications. If we had waited for that legislation before we started collecting Australian web archives, it would be gone. So attending to legal deposit for my colleagues, I think, would be terrific.

I'd also just like to note, in terms of the Copyright Act, that modernisation is an ongoing process. We're delighted that at the beginning of 2019 at last the notion of perpetual copyright in unpublished material will disappear and it will become more sensible. I think it may even be today that the safe harbour legislation may pass through the House, which would mean that we'd have the same protections as ISPs in terms of providing internet services inside the libraries. Certainly we would continue to advocate for modernisation and for broad approaches to fair use rather than the very narrow approaches we have in the Copyright Act at the moment. Even if we think we might fix a few of those at the moment, in 10 years time we'll be back in the same position, because the world will have moved on in ways we can't anticipate. So I think that for some of us the Copyright Act is a very important part of our legislative arrangement as well.

Ms BRODTMANN: Thank you. So there is a precedent in terms of this legal deposit, at the Library?

Dr Ayres: We had legal deposit right from 1968 from the Copyright Act, but for physical collections, which our colleagues don't have. As I've said to you, it took us 23 years to get the right to collect born-digital publications. Clearly for our colleagues at the NFSA it needs to be agnostic. You need to be able to just collect that copy of everything regardless.

Ms BRODTMANN: That's right. Okay. That's been very useful. Thank you.

CHAIR: I'm happy to go over time a little bit on this discussion, because I've also got a couple of things to raise. In relation to private funding, I've had some tourism operators mention to me a couple of things in this space. If you could have another thousand visitors a week visit your institutions, while that would be positive strategically, it would come at a cost, I presume.

Unidentified speaker: Yes.

CHAIR: I think, for each of your institutions, there's no cost to visit.

Dr Ayres: No. They're free.

CHAIR: Okay—free at all of them?

Dr Ayres: Yes.

CHAIR: Is there an ability to offer particular tourism operators a premium product—to go down into the bottom of the Library to see behind the scenes, or to see something special at the Archives—that could be a boost to your own funding arrangements?

Dr Ayres: We already offer that kind of premium product—

CHAIR: You do?

Dr Ayres: through our volunteers. We offer behind-the-scenes tours every day of the week. On weekends we have volunteers—

CHAIR: What's the cost?

Dr Ayres: Our volunteers basically take people on those tours, so we don't charge for them. We think it's just a really important way for people to understand what we do. I should also note that, unlike some of the other cultural institutions, we don't charge entry to our exhibitions. Our exhibitions are small—they are not multiple rooms—and, frankly, it would be unsustainable. We couldn't even afford a ticketing system to manage that. So, for us, I don't see any opportunity to raise more funds from members of the public who walk in the door. We need to seek other funding methods.

CHAIR: Across all the institutions—consistently?

Mr Fricker: With some exceptions. We do have ticketed events at the Archives for a particular performance. It might be during the Enlighten Festival here in Canberra or something like that. But we don't charge admission for exhibitions, for access to reading rooms or to register as a researcher et cetera. I don't object to that, though. I think all of us feel that we're here to create a public good—well, I shouldn't speak for everyone, but I think I do—and we don't want to put a paywall, as I said earlier, between Australia's cultural heritage and Australians. However, I think there is a place for a premium event, a premium service, where I think the ability to charge for that would enable us to create the event, and it would be another avenue through which we could promote what
we do and the collection and those sorts of things. So I think there is a place for that. It's a bit difficult sometimes to do that under the current legislative regime.

**CHAIR:** You've all mentioned the issue of IT, cybersecurity and digital collections. To what extent do you share knowledge or resources in this area? Do you all have individual systems or do you work together? Is there a central system? Are there any efficiencies there?

**Dr Ayres:** As I said, we have a big IT shop. Ten per cent of our budget and 10 per cent of our staff are in our IT area, and I'd estimate another 10 per cent of our staff are involved in working with our IT staff to make things happen. We don't share systems with the other institutions, but we share systems with libraries across Australia. I mentioned resource sharing, archiving websites and newspaper digitisation. There are really big efficiencies when you're doing very like things, which is why we've centralised those. And it's why, by early 2019, we'll have a single national e-deposit system for our deposit management and preservation of all Australian publications in digital form, instead of it happening in nine different jurisdictions. So I think it's just important to recognise that sometimes the efficiencies are across Commonwealth-state borders, as well as within.

**CHAIR:** That's very good to hear.

**Mr Fricker:** Trove is a platform which is shared by many. We've shared capability for the preservation of film with the film and sound archive, and we certainly share technology and know-how. There's a high level of collaboration. It's not always as easy as people might think, with the way budget cycles work and investment cycles work, etcetera, but the spirit is alive and well across the institutions to share whenever we can and collaborate on projects.

**Dr Ayres:** On sharing know-how and capability, and the fact that our staff often cycle around the cultural institutions, I don't think we should underestimate how much capability we develop through that as well. Our CIOs and CFOs meet regularly. That human capability is just as important as a system.

**CHAIR:** On the cybersecurity front, do you fund your responsibilities on that basis or can there be a greater role for more centralised advice, review and support in relation to the cybersecurity issues that you will face?

**Dr Ayres:** We'd need to take that question on notice.

**CHAIR:** Can you please?

**Dr Ayres:** Yes.

**Mr Muller:** It's a big issue, I would say, because we work with closed systems. We were talking more about disaster recovery—what happens if the digital asset crashes or whatever. That means we need to invest in those sorts of recovery methods.

**CHAIR:** You'd probably have greater concerns in this area, Mr Fricker.

**Mr Fricker:** That's right. We are in the process of creating a secure IT environment, because we are receiving deposits of highly classified records from government agencies, which need to remain closed for at least 20 years. It's a huge issue for us, and it's also an issue for us in terms of the advice we provide to the Commonwealth, as a regulatory agent, for how information should be managed across the Commonwealth as well.

**Dr Ayres:** Legislation, of course, brings new requirements, the changes to the privacy legislation, like the need to ensure that we're fitting with new European provisions. If we have people using us from Europe, they bring new IT and cybersecurity requirements. I think it depends on how far along you are. We're using our modernisation funding to help us get to at least a base level on the Essential Eight. If we had not received that modernisation funding, I have no idea how we would have done that.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** With my cybersecurity hat on: are you compliant with the Essential Eight; are you compliant with the Essential Eight; and—

**CHAIR:** And what is the Essential Eight!

**Ms BRODTMANN:** The Essential Eight is the ASD's list of things that you need to do to be cyber-resilient. An audit report has found that there's only one government agency that is cyber-resilient—that's DHS—despite assurances that everyone would be cyber-resilient, so this is a concern. Mr Fricker and I have had roundtables on this issue. I imagine you're getting to the Essential Eight?

**Dr Ayres:** We're getting there.

**Mr Fricker:** It's the same for us. Every time we go back to it, we realise we have to do more because you never finish—

**Mr Muller:** Remember, we all recently had to get rid of our ration software.
Dr Ayres: In terms of the Essential Eight, we think we'll get to—as I said, only with this additional funding—the base level. The costs to jump up from level 2 to level 3 are just enormous, so we will face those decisions. It's not small when you have a big digital offering.

Ms BRODTMANN: Are you part of the gateway? Small agencies, I understand, are allowed into the gateway, where there's automatic patching and automatic backing-up. From my investigations it seems to be optional, even though it is, in theory, mandated for small agencies to be part of the gateway.

Dr Ayres: We're much too big for them.

Mr Muller: You are a gateway!

Dr Ayres: We are! Our digital collection and traffic are much too big, so, although we're a small agency, we don't fit that. Last year, Trove was the Commonwealth's fourth most used website. So the amount of traffic is much too big. A small agency might be 'small' in terms of your digital collection and your digital traffic. We don't fit that, so we must do it ourselves.

Mr Fricker: I'm very happy to say here in this formal committee that, every time we look at it, we realise there's more to do. So, even when you think you're complying with the top four or the essential eight, technology moves so quickly. The configuration of all of our systems is so complex that we need to constantly look and look and look. Even yesterday we discovered another vulnerability, which was patched yesterday. So I'm never one to sit in a committee like this and say, 'We're covered,' because I know enough about what's going on to say, 'No, we're not covered.'

Ms BRODTMANN: Mr Muller, it goes to your point, too, about recovery, because it's not just a case of ticking the box—

Mr Muller: That's right. It requires investments—

Ms BRODTMANN: and getting all of that in place; it's firstly your resilience and then your ability to recover.

Mr Muller: Yes. We found out that we were vulnerable when it came to our digital storage. It means that next year in our budget we will see huge investments to be able to recover things, if necessary, because it's all we have. This is the core of what we do.

Ms BRODTMANN: And that's a diminishing budget.

Mr Muller: Exactly.

Dr Ayres: And certainly there are costs in terms of events in digital services. A couple of years ago, we looked at what it would cost us to get our big digital services up and running again in the event of a major disaster, and it was completely unaffordable. Certainly, with the cloud coming onstream, that will probably become more affordable, but there's the safety of our collections. Also, what does the public expect of you in the digital space and how quickly could you get back there if you had a major disaster? They are concerns as well.

Ms BRODTMANN: You talked about the cost of going into the cloud, and so you're sticking with this national arrangement with other libraries.

Dr Ayres: Yes.

Ms BRODTMANN: Can you just give us a breakdown of that, just on notice—

Dr Ayres: Certainly. We have just done that.

Ms BRODTMANN: because, as you know, there's a government push to get people onto—

Dr Ayres: It's two to three times as much—

Ms BRODTMANN: It's two to three times as much?

Dr Ayres: Yes. At the moment, it's two to three times as expensive to put either our collections or our web services into the cloud as it is to run them internally. But I think our CIO has done some very detailed work. I would be happy to do that. It will change in the next few years, but right now the tipping point is not there.

Ms BRODTMANN: As you know, the government pushes to get people on the cloud.

Dr Ayres: Yes.

CHAIR: Just finally on the issue of board members: I understand the Library has two parliamentarians on its board.

Dr Ayres: That's right.

CHAIR: Are they on other institutions? No? Nothing?
Mr Fricker: We have two parliamentarians on our advisory council. We have two parliamentary representatives.

CHAIR: What is the benefit of that?

Mr Fricker: There is an enormous wisdom, of course, Chair!

CHAIR: I knew that this question was a bit cheeky.

Mr Fricker: Need you ask!

Dr Ayres: We couldn't have brought the National Library to Parliament House yesterday, without Mr Julian Leeser and Senator Claire Moore. They understand our business. They are passionate about our collections and they helped to bring us up to parliament. We couldn't have done it without them.

Mr Muller: So the question is: what would you miss if there wasn't one parliamentarian on your board? We don't have one.

Ms Cardew-Hall: We don't have one. You have two.

Mr Muller: Exactly.

Mr Fricker: Despite my rather facetious response earlier, Minister Jane Prentice and Senator Moore are on the advisory council of the Archives. I absolutely agree with what has just been said. They bring a great deal to the advisory council in terms of how we should address the challenges that we face: how we should respond to government and how we should work with government and with parliament on the challenges we face. They give us a great depth in terms of strategic leadership on where the Archives should be going.

CHAIR: The advisory council is your board equivalent?

Mr Fricker: That's right. So it's nonexecutive. It is purely there to advise my office and the Attorney-General, the minister, on any matters relating to the operation of the Archives; it's a non-executive advisory council.

CHAIR: Normally, the members of parliament you've mentioned are non-executive members. They are backbench members of parliament. So you would have a large number of MPs over time cycle through, I presume, in those positions.

Dr Ayres: They tend to stay for a while, because they get hooked. In fact, Julian Leeser told us when he joined us that joining the National Library Council was on his bucket list.

CHAIR: I know Mr Leeser well. I believe that to be true.

Dr Ayres: Yes, he did tell me that. But, seriously, I think that one of the things that having a member and a senator does is that over time they continue to remind us about the breadth of Australia, about the people spread across electorates and about the different communities that are represented. So for us it's a really important part of our discussions going on at council and has worked very positively for us, especially when, as now, we have two members who are absolutely committed to what we do and to helping us to advance that. It works very well for us.

CHAIR: What do you think the benefit is to those individual members or to the parliament?

Dr Ayres: I think one of the benefits to the parliament would be spreading the news about what our institutions offer to all of their constituents. It's that circularity that happens. So I think that that would be a benefit to them. There is also just getting in touch with our collections. Nobody should underestimate this. Collections are wonderful, wonderful things, and there are the opportunities that they have to explore them, understand them, understand the multiple identities in our collections and bring them back to the house. It might be hard to put your finger on. I don't doubt that it happens and has value.

Mr Fricker: Can I just add something. Our advisory council went to Darwin the week before last.

Ms Williams: Last week.

Mr Fricker: Would you mind just briefly explaining what happened? Senator Moore was part of this.

Ms Williams: Some of the activities that the advisory council were exposed to and involved with in Darwin when they visited were to participate in and be part of the handover of the Larrakia petition to the Larrakia Nation. They were also involved in a tour and site visit of the Northern Territory Archives Centre, where the National Archives is co-located with the Northern Territory Archives Service. So they observed and handled firsthand the archival collections of both archives and were also exposed to the outreach activities that occur at the Northern Territory Archives Centre—for example, a joint exhibition which includes the collection items of both the National Archives and the Northern Territory Archives Service. There was also a dinner with Her Honour the
Administrator of the Northern Territory and a dinner with key members of the history fraternity. There were representatives from historical societies, the Genealogical Society et cetera.

Mr Fricker: Through their work with us—which we are very grateful for, I might add—it's staying connected with the cultural life of Australia. It's where we began the conversation. It's about the cultural identity of Australia. So I think there is a great deal of benefit that flows back to the parliament from having those firsthand experiences not only in Canberra but right across Australia with the cultural identity of Australia.

CHAIR: Finally, does the National Archives keep collections on behalf of non-government entities as well, or is your mandate strictly just for government records?

Mr Fricker: We have private papers as well, and we have non-Commonwealth records which form part of the collection.

CHAIR: So what would some of those non-Commonwealth records be? Are they on behalf of organisations?

Mr Fricker: No. Primarily they're about persons important to the Commonwealth: governors general, former prime ministers, chief justices and other historically significant people. Otherwise they are collections which, as with the other institutions here today, provide some sort of insight into some episode or development of Australia's culture.

Dr Ayres: We collect non-government archives from organisations. Examples would be the records of the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the RSL, the Australian Republican Movement, Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Mr Muller: It is the same for us—for examples, commercial broadcasts, film, documentary makers and private collections.

Ms BRODTMANN: You've got former politicians on your board. You've heard the value that's provided by current politicians to the Archives and the Library. Can you outline what the former politicians—

Mr Muller: It is the connections they provide to create awareness and to provide advocacy for the institutions, so, yes, I think it makes sense.

Ms BRODTMANN: Who are on your board?

Mr Muller: Fiona Scott, Paul—

Ms Labrum: Paul Neville. I might say that they've contributed probably more in terms of actually having some personal interest in aspects of what the archive does. Their possibly ongoing connections with politicians have also been useful in terms of promoting some of the things that we're doing. But I think it's very different from having a current connected one.

Ms BRODTMANN: Have you thought about getting current politicians instead of former ones on your board? Is there some sort of—

Mr Muller: It's not up to us.

Ms BRODTMANN: Is it in the governing legislation?

Mr Muller: The minister decides.

Mr Fricker: Ours is in the legislation.

Ms BRODTMANN: Is yours in the act?

Dr Ayres: Our act specifies a member and a senator, but other appointments, of course, rest with the minister. So in our legislation, yes, it's there.

Mr Muller: We're not involved at all.

CHAIR: From what you've heard, do you see benefit for your organisation?

Mr Muller: It is hard to say after six or seven months in the country, but I guess it makes sense. In the Netherlands it was actually forbidden. It was not allow for parliamentarians to be part of a board.

Ms BRODTMANN: It's not paid—

Mr Muller: It makes sense. There's a connection there. It's creating awareness for what we do, and that makes sense.

Ms BRODTMANN: Okay.

CHAIR: Thank you for your attendance here today. If you've been asked to provide any additional information, please do so by Friday, 6 July. You will also be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and you will have an opportunity to request corrections to any transcription errors.
CHAIR: Welcome. Although the committee doesn't require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and therefore has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as contempt of parliament. The evidence given today will be recorded by Hansard and attracts parliamentary privilege. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to discussion.

Ms Bennett: We have no opening statement except to issue an invitation to the committee to come and visit the CSIRO Discovery Centre.

CHAIR: We'd love to.

Mrs Manen: We have no opening statement, thank you.

Ms Driver: On behalf of Questacon's director, Professor Graham Durant, I pass on his apologies for not being able to make it today. He is on some well-earned long service leave but will be returning to the country next month and also extends the invitation for you to visit both of our campuses—the National Science and Technology Centre down at the parliamentary triangle and the Ian Potter Foundation Technology Learning Centre, which is our second campus here in Canberra—at your convenience.

CHAIR: I have visited Questacon on a number of occasions but not the Ian Potter centre, so that will be interesting.

Ms Driver: You're in for a treat.

CHAIR: I'm opening up these discussions with some similar questions. They sound naive, but I want to start at high-level principles. Why is what you do important? What does it matter if you're doing it or you're not doing it? What's the strategic importance of being able to share the story that you do with the visitors that come and see you? Can we look at this as an umbrella— not specifically for your institution as a whole but in your broader field in relation to science and technology?

Mrs Manen: Perhaps I will start and say that government is committed to supporting Australian science, including science engagement, and the National Science Statement released by the government sets out the government's vision for Australian society to be engaged in and enriched by science. One of those four objectives under the vision is engaging all Australians in science and technology, and certainly Questacon and Discovery are one part of the way in which the government progresses and seeks to achieve those objectives. I think that, importantly, science, innovation and technology are a core part of what the government is trying to do in its economic agenda, and the two institutions that are here with me today are a key part of that program of work.

CHAIR: For each of the organisations: how much do you focus on collection as opposed to public-facing, visitor-type activities? It might be different for each of them.

Ms Driver: Questacon is not a collecting institution, so we don't hold any collections. However, we do work with other cultural institutions to showcase collections. A good example of that at the moment is our colour exhibition in the centre. This has some rocks from the national rock collection that show fluoresece and what it means. If you look carefully in the display case in the colour exhibition, you'll also see use of fluorescents. There's a very nice licence for our RoboQ that shows the security elements of how you use fluorescents and so on to showcase that piece. We've got some of the entomology collection from the CSIRO in that same exhibition. So, while we don't hold collections, we work with institutions to try to showcase them in the context of the work that we do as well.

Ms Bennett: Within CSIRO again, the discovery centre itself is not a collection agency, but the CSIRO does hold a number of national collections, and they are an active part. For us, as Mary can talk about, the discovery
centre surfaces CSIRO science, so there's a much stronger link from our science—and hence our collections are a valuable part of active science—through to what's exhibited and used by visitors in the discovery centre.

**CHAIR:** The Australian National Insect Collection is part of CSIRO?

**Ms Bennett:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Could you take on notice the list of the different collections that CSIRO would manage?

**Ms Bennett:** Certainly. I can provide it here but am happy to take it on notice.

**CHAIR:** Oh, provide it here if you can.

**Ms Bennett:** We have six national collections. They are the primary ones. They are the National Insect Collection, the National Wildlife Collection, the Tree Seed Centre, the Australian National Herbarium, the Australian National Fish Collection and the Australian National Algae Culture Collection. Then we have a number of smaller ones that aren't national.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** The insect collection is fab. It's the only one of its kind in the country—in the world—isn't it?

**Ms Bennett:** Yes.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** It's extraordinary. You should get out there.

**Ms Driver:** And come to Questacon and have a look at it in 'Colours'.

**CHAIR:** We have so many invitations. This is very important. I want to come to the issue that we're seeing in education. In this inquiry I want to look at the strategic importance of what we do. I think that's the best basis on which to grow and defend the role of the institutions and make sure they're achieving their objectives. When I think about your particular institutions, I think about inspiring young people. We hear a lot about STEM—science, technology, engineering and maths. How important is it in relation to your exhibitions? Do you see an important part of your role being to inspire the next generation of young people and that inspiration leading to further education and careers in relation to these areas? Are you adequately resourced to do that?

**Ms Bennett:** It's absolutely fundamental to us. It's based in our act. In our act we have a specific provision that talks about cooperating with tertiary education institutions, so right back from 1949, at the origin of the act, it's been there. I'll let Mary talk more about it.

**Ms Mulcahy:** We do work to inspire students. We also work with teachers to ensure that they have access to relevant information. It shows how what they're teaching in the classroom applies to the research in science and technology as it's happening. One of the really important things about our programs is that we evaluate them, and we can show that this has an impact—that students are inspired, that teachers feel more capable and understand how that science is applied in the real world. One of the really important things for students is the ability either to see what is possible or to meet someone that they can self-identify with, so they can have a vision and understand that journey that they're going on. A number of our programs are having a big impact with that. Students can actually see scientists. They see the research. They can connect and therefore see that there's a possibility of a career. And they see how they're learning in the classroom is applied in the real world.

**Ms Bennett:** The discovery centres aim to focus on the research and, through that, the impact of what you do with the outcome of science on the continuum. We want to surface research and excite people about the research process and being a researcher or having a career in research. Obviously, there are two sides of the coin. There is the process of getting there, and there's where Questacon would be on the continuum: taking on what the outcome of science is and how you use it and getting the inspiration that way. You can reach people in different ways, and we work together to try to do that.

**Ms Mulcahy:** Discovery is a relatively small part of a much larger education outreach program that CSIRO runs. Yes, it's based in Canberra, but most of the visitors are from interstate, so, even though it's a territory based program, it actually has a national reach. CSIRO is looking to have national programs at scale to differentiate us from some others in the market. So it's a small part, but there's a much bigger story to tell, and we work really closely together.

**Ms Driver:** You spoke about teachers. STEM X is a joint program that the CSIRO and Questacon have taken forward this year. That's about inspiring teachers. We're in the high 90 percentages of satisfaction and quality in terms of the evaluation coming out of those programs. Coming back to your question, Chair: how important is it? Obviously, as Questacon, we'd say that it's critically important. We would probably go as far as to say that inspiration is our core business. An uninspired person won't have any motivation to change the world. If you think about the continuum of science engagement in the context of this question, you are talking about a very complex
ecosystem of a person who goes through their life having multiple influences, multiple touch points and multiple
moments of inspiration and so we're coming at it from a number of perspectives.

Questacon is generally associated with the young, but, in fact, at our establishment, we were asked to look at
the young and the not so young. We do also focus on teachers, communities and young people. If you put it in the
context of the economic transformation agenda, for example, which is where much of this conversation is
happening—at the intersection of both formal education and informal education—we collectively place ourselves
in that informal education sector, which is the scaffolding around that formal education sector. The transformation
agenda is not only about STEM skills but about the environment in which young people are brought through that
system by confident teachers who are able to articulate the skills to deal with uncertainty, the digital skills of the
future, the entrepreneurial skills and so on, which is part of the broader agenda. There are probably about 60-odd
toddlers about a kilometre from here down in Mini Q at this very moment.

CHAIR: I've been there.

Ms Driver: It is a good place and it's a hard place to feel sad.

CHAIR: You can get very wet.

Ms Driver: The water play area is the reason why we have a dryer in the basement! Statistically, those
toddlers have every chance of living until the 22nd century. This is in the lifetime of young Australians today, and
the ecosystem that they are brought through is enhanced by institutions like the CSIRO Discovery Centre and
Questacon and other cultural institutions. It is not only to add the fundamental building blocks of that STEM
economic transformation but you heard from colleagues earlier that it's also about that little touch of magic, that
little bit of inspiration. It is that motivation, that imagination and that creative skill set that the Foundation for
Young Australians has actually done research into, which said that it's just as important for that transformation
agenda that people have that broader set of skills rather than just the fundamentals. That's where we see our role
in terms of, 'Is it important?' Yes, we'd say it's critical.

CHAIR: I'm trying to draw some themes together between the institutions. Part of that is about them telling
the Australian story, which is important. You come to Canberra to learn about our Australian story. Your
institutions are not as directly focused on that as the Library or Archives would be. How do you counter what I
just said? What elements do you do that are absolutely focused on the Australian story in the fields in which your
focus?

Ms Bennett: The vast majority of CSIRO science is for the benefit of Australia. If you come to the Discovery
Centre, you can see a display on cotton. CSIRO has been fundamental in the last 48 years to the generation of a
cotton industry that is world-class. We've now taken the same germ plasm out to over 1/3 of the international
production of cotton. I'd say that would be one example immediately. It is very definitely an Australian story.

Ms Mulcahy: The focus of the Discovery Centre is to talk about CSIRO's research. If you're talking about
thorough research, we're talking about Australian research and the fundamental challenges that have existed and
will exist in the future for Australia.

Ms Driver: I approach the question in three parts. The first part is the that vast majority of the content that
Questacon—in the two campuses of the National Science and Technology Centre in Canberra and the exhibitions
and programs that we take across the country, which is the larger part of our national outreach—is actually
created in Questacon by Australian STEM educators, by scientists and through collaborations with organisations
like CSIRO and Australian researchers. We're showcasing that but in a different perspective.

The second is we also have a number of young Australians who go out and present programs and are role
models for people—teachers, young people, communities—and who show that a scientist is more than just a
person in a lab. We have the Shell Questacon Science Circus, for example, that travels across regional Australia
every year. That is staffed by 16 Masters of Science Communication students who have come through science
disciplines. That is the role modelling aspect.

The third aspect is in things like our digital exhibition called Enterprising Australians. As we travel around the
country, we actually collect and curate video stories of little-known Australian innovators and inventors in the
communities we're visiting. That goes back to the role modelling thing.

CHAIR: I hope you share those videos with the Film and Sound Archive.

Ms Driver: Having heard their evidence, I will actually check that we are putting them alongside the Film and
Sound Archive's activities. That has the benefit of a person being from a young person's community and being
there after we've moved on to another town—a role model and a person who is actually practising Australian
science, doing Australian innovation in their community, who has been part of a national exhibition that can be
viewed internationally as well. I don't know that it would be true to say we're not modelling Australian stories; we're showcasing it from a different perspective.

**CHAIR:** Do you participate in the PACER program?

**Ms Driver:** No, we don't. We have a knock-on benefit. Quite a significant proportion—I would have to take on notice the actual percentage, but it was either in the high 80 or early 90 percentage—of schools that come to Canberra on the PACER program do the additional discretionary spend on a visit to Questacon. That has translated into additional bed nights in some cases, but it's also seen the growth of our Q By Night product. We have a product that is a little bit more exclusive. The centre is open until about half past nine at night for booked school groups. They come to have a dinner package and go through. While we don't get the formal PACER funding, we certainly have a benefit because those students are already in Canberra.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** How much extra is that package for students?

**Ms Driver:** The Q By Night program is a booked school group package. We have booked school group rates that are less than the ticketing process, but I would have to confirm the Q By Night pricing so I'm giving you accurate information.

**Ms Mulcahy:** Apparently 80 per cent of students who visit the centre come on that program, but we are like Questacon.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** You're not part of the formal process. But is it free for them to drop in?

**Ms Mulcahy:** No, they actually pay.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** How much do they pay for that?

**Ms Mulcahy:** It's $10 per student, and there is one teacher who enters free-of-charge per 10 students, and then we have other programs on top of that. For example, we have the DNA program, which is $15 per student and, again, one free teacher per 10 students.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Do they get a little meal or snack or anything? How long is that session?

**Ms Mulcahy:** It's a 90-minute session. They don't get a meal.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Could we get some more details in writing—

**Ms Mulcahy:** Yes, we can do that.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** about the base $10 program and then what you get for the $15 one. We'll get Ms Driver's in writing as well.

**Ms Driver:** The two products are quite different though. It's not comparing apples and apples. A visit to the CSIRO Discovery Centre gives a different outcome to a visit to Questacon.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** I'm not suggesting that they're in any way connected or similar.

**Ms Driver:** Quite often we'll have several school groups booked in waves through the evening, so we might have a 5.30 group of three or four buses and then another three or four buses at 7.30. They might buy a dinner package; they may not. It just depends. We can get you the pricing on notice.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** It is so I can have an idea. You have the groups coming up here and you're saying 80 to 90 per cent of the students pay the extra to take part. I would like an idea about yours as well, Ms Mulcahy.

**Ms Mulcahy:** We will.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** I don't know whether you saw the ACT government's submission, but they've recommended that Questacon become a statutory authority after expressing concern that there are a number of legacy issues. The Simpson review of 2008 made a strong recommendation for you to do that. Their main concern was the fact that, given your current governance arrangements, you aren't in any real position to fundraise. I'm just going back over my notes so I can get the exact language. Do you have a response to that?

**Ms Driver:** I don't know that our governance arrangements have prevented us from raising funds. We are currently 51 per cent self-funded through revenue. That includes our tourism business as well as sponsorships and philanthropic donations. So I'm not sure that would be the deciding factor. Certainly our fundraising comes from a few different perspectives. A number of views have expressed the need to look at us as an independent statutory authority. It's a vexed issue. We've been operating this way for 30 years and we have been able to attract fundraising from different perspectives over time. We link it to fundraising of exhibitions, programs and so on. Recently, the government requested Questacon and our parent department to look into the establishment of a philanthropic foundation. That was established in the recent budget. Deductible gift recipient status was given to that foundation. That's entirely separate to Questacon. That's an independent body. It was established by Mr Eddie
Kutner, who's an Australian philanthropist and businessman, and the trust deed of that entity is for the benefit of Questacon's activities and programs. So we've managed over time to find ways to fundraise in any event.

The question of our governance is an interesting one because it hasn't really stopped us performing and it's about the way that we've structured our entire business and our entire mindset. It's important to see the difference between a museum and a science centre in this perspective. Science centres are slightly different beasts. Globally amongst the science centre sector, Questacon is quite unique in terms of our capacity to sit within a government department and feed back on-the-ground experience into the policymaking process. That is actually quite unique worldwide and does give us a certain amount of agility that we otherwise wouldn't have. The flipside of that is that we are trying to run a tourism business and philanthropic fundraising activities within the paradigm of a government department. You have to work around how budget rules can be managed, how a special account can be managed for placement of funds, drawdown and so on. But it hasn't stopped us. It warrants consideration, but probably when the time is right. It's not really a first-order priority right now. I'd defer to my colleague Mrs Manen from the department, because we've actually been talking about this in the context of the science agenda and how that unique flexibility and the two sides of this question can actually be a benefit and possibly a barrier that we've managed to work around over time.

CHAIR: It was recommended in the Simpson review in 2008.

Ms BRODTMANN: Yes.

Mrs Manen: I just reiterate what Kate has said in terms of the real benefit of having Questacon in the department for policy development purposes and being able to have a two-way exchange of information between Questacon and the policymakers in the department about what works, what works well and how we can harness what already exists, not only from within the Commonwealth but also around the country in terms of the really broad network of activities underway in science engagement, with which Questacon has a really broad-ranging national network. I just reiterate that, yes, it's right that it's continued to be considered in the context of the environment and the operations going forward, but certainly it hasn't prevented an enormous amount of success for Questacon to date and there are extraordinary benefits in having Questacon placed in the department.

Ms Driver: There are pros and cons for it. You would have heard from our colleagues across the cultural sector about some of the challenges they face. We're possibly better supported at times as well because we sit under a larger department. It goes in swings and roundabouts and it's part of a broader question about how the government sees Questacon as the National Science and Technology Centre and as an asset across the Commonwealth government, with the agility that we may be able to actually have in terms of working with all of the Australian science agencies in a very close collaboration, performing the kinds of activities we do in terms of programming, exhibitions, teacher development—those kinds of activities.

CHAIR: You're currently exploring commissionable rates. Can you update the committee on that issue?

Ms Driver: We've been a successful tourism business for 30 years. In fact, we're going for the Hall of Fame in the Australian Tourism Awards this year. In fact, we've got five days left before the period closes. We're trying very hard to see if we can actually win three in a row and become part of the Hall of Fame as the best tourist attraction in Australia. We're pretty proud of that. That has shaped the way we do things. In terms of commissionable rates, there are two different products: the domestic product and the international product. Commissionable rates, for the benefit of the committee, are around being able to place our product with tour operators. We do a lot of booking of school groups and visiting touring groups through a lot of Australian tour operators. We've recently become part of the group booking system that NCETP, under the National Capital Attractions Association, is running here in Canberra and we hope to see a bit more benefit from that. Our membership of the NCETP allows us to market into the sector in Australia.

Going forward as international flights have opened up into Canberra, we think that there is a unique offering not only for Questacon but for the Canberra product with the inbound groups from places like Singapore, who have a requirement to do international travel as part of their formal education system. We can look for an opportunity to have good-quality STEM content products and good-quality cultural experiences. It's actually a really good opportunity for Canberra to sell that product. We are exploring a few pilots, possibly in the next financial year, to see if we can place some commissionable products in places like Singapore and New Zealand, because the direct flights are the markets that we're more likely to attract people to.

CHAIR: That's an amazing opportunity. I didn't realise Singapore had that arrangement as part of their formal education. With the direct flights, there should be a very good opportunity to support—
Ms Driver: It's an opportunity for that Canberra product. It's a quite unique offering in the Australian context, and NCAA have been very strong in supporting all of the attractions in the educational tourism space in looking at packaging that product and sell the Canberra culture, the Canberra STEM experience, to that market.

Ms BRODTMANN: What is the NCAA?

Ms Driver: The NCAA is the National Capital Attractions Association. It's one of the part-owners of the National Capital Tourism Education Project.

CHAIR: They're going to appear before us as well. Thank you so much for your attendance here today. If you've been asked to provide any additional information, please forward it to the secretary by Friday, 6 July. You'll be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and will have the opportunity to request corrections to transcription errors.

Proceedings suspended from 12:23 to 12:55
BENNET, Ms Leanne, Assistant Director, Branch Head Corporate Services, Australian War Memorial

DAWSON, Major General (Retired) Brian, Assistant Director, Branch Head National Collection, Australian War Memorial

NELSON, Dr Brendan, Director, Australian War Memorial

PATTERSON, Ms Leanne, Assistant Director, Branch Head Public Programs, Australian War Memorial

CHAIR: Welcome. Although the committee doesn't require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and, therefore, has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses. The giving a false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The evidence given today will be recorded by Hansard and attracts parliamentary privilege. I invite you to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to discussion.

Dr Nelson: Thank you. We, as custodians of the Australian War Memorial, are immensely proud of the institution, our staff, our volunteers and what we are able to do on behalf of the nation. Over the last five years we have approached visitation at onsite and offsite facilities approaching 1.1 million. In 2016 the institution was ranked No. 1 of 252 cultural institutions and facilities in Canberra. It was No. 1 on TripAdvisor in Australia and is currently No. 2 in Australia on TripAdvisor. Our VIP visitor visitation has increased by 87 per cent, and in that period of time we've also had a five per cent increase in student visitation and a 50 per cent increase in participation in Anzac Day ceremonies, so we're very proud of what we've been able to achieve.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Dr Nelson. I'm want to start by asking what might seem a naive question. I want you to think about the issues, not in relation to your institution alone but in relation to all of the institutions here in Canberra, why are they important? What are they seeking to do from a strategic perspective? Why is it important that Australians experience the Australian story through the different institutions and if they don't what are the risks?

Dr Nelson: These institutions are who we are—to understand what it means to be in Australia and to have a greater belief in ourselves. We are Australians defined less by our Constitution, and the machinery of a democracy given us by the British, than we are by our values and our beliefs, and the way relate to one another and see our place in the world. We are shaped most by our triumphs and our failures, our heroes and villains, the way as a people we face diversity and how we will face the inevitable adversities that are coming.

The cultural institutions, particularly, but not only of course, the Australian War Memorial, are where we reveal who we are. Just one simple but very powerful illustration is about 15 months ago, and this is not unusual to see, there were two ladies wearing full burkas with young children around them in the First World War galleries in the reflection area. I approached them and introduced myself. I asked them where they were from. They said they were from Auburn in Sydney. One of the ladies said, 'We came from Pakistan eight years ago. We are now Australians'. I said, 'Thank you for coming here'. She said, 'No, we love it here. It's our third visit. This is where we learned to be Aussie' and that encapsulates precisely what this is about.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Nelson. For an individual who has visited the War Memorial and other cultural and democratic institutions here in Canberra as opposed to somebody who doesn't have that opportunity, who doesn't come and visit either in person or through your online presence, what difference does it make to them as an active and engaged citizen of this country?

Dr Nelson: I can only speak with any degree of authority about the Australian War Memorial. It is not until you come to the Australian War Memorial that you really understand who we are, what makes us tick as Australians. It is a journey of discovery for visitors. It is in a context of war but it is not actually about war. The paradox is that it is about love and friendship—love for friends and between friends, love of family, love of our country. It is honouring men and women whose lives are devoted not to themselves but to us and their last moments to one another. Such is the emotion revealed at the War Memorial—I am patron of Lifeline, by the way—that within months of being in the job I realised that we needed to put our staff through the accidental counselling program. Whether it is up in the Roll of Honour or in the gallery themselves, it is a very common experience for people to reveal quite immense and often uncontrollable motion. That is at the more significant end of that experience. But without doubt, in my opinion, people leave the Australian War Memorial having learned much more about themselves than they have perhaps learned about the stories that are being told of the men and women—particularly in the case of young people, a life of value, whatever you do with, is one spent in the service of others, whatever the cost to yourself. As I say, you don't realise what you're learning when you are
learning it, but you learn an immense amount in a cultural institution—particularly here in Canberra and especially at the Australian War Memorial.

You asked me about people who don't have that experience. You may have seen in our submission that our branding exercise—I don't like that expression, by the way—is 'for we are young and free', which is the first line of our national anthem. We sing it often. When we say 'young', we mean our nationhood. Obviously, Aboriginal people have 60,000 years of history and custodianship here. But the paradox is that, too often, we take for granted these things that are most important to us. It is not really until you come to, in our case, the Australian War Memorial that you get a sense of why we are free—particularly, but not only, those one million Australian men and women who mobilised in the Second World War. Today, as we meet here, we have young Australians deployed throughout the world in our name against a resurgent totalitarianism. So I think people who aren't able to experience the War Memorial, whether it is a physical visit or a virtual or online experience, are being deprived of the opportunity to be reminded of what is arguably the most important thing that we take for granted, and that is our freedoms.

CHAIR: Let's look at physical visitors to the memorial. Do you track age, gender, ethnicity, postcodes—a whole range of information about your visitors? Is there anything particularly telling about who visits the War Memorial? In the context of what we have spoken about—the importance of coming to learn about Australia's story here in Canberra—is there a segment of the community who are not visiting who we need to encourage to visit by certain means?

Dr Nelson: We have done a bit of work on this. Some of the things you have mentioned we cannot be too specific in asking people about. Anne Bennie is the assistant director who oversees this. I will ask her to respond to that.

Ms Bennie: We do measure a range of information from visitors to the War Memorial. We conduct a general visitor survey. We do have a challenge when trying to interview those of a non-English speaking background, and we are taking measures to roll out a non-English audio guide later this year for some of the major languages. We do know that our visitation from international visitors is only about 12 per cent, so we are talking predominantly about Australia visitors. We are mainly looking for what they understood about what they visited and also their satisfaction as part of their visit. We do conduct some other individual surveys. Ultimately, we get a satisfaction rating and a lot of that survey is reflected in our annual report.

Is there a segment that is not visiting? That is not evident to us. Of course, the nature of travel means it is somewhat limiting apart from larger family groups. Indeed, when you are outside the things that tie you down—family, work and that sort of thing—there is some mobility in those upper age groups. Certainly, we see families. We see people from 25 or 30 right through to 65. There is a large demographic there and there are accompanying children within some of those groups. It is not so much just immediate family groups; they are often large family groups given that visiting friends and family is a big reason why people come to Canberra.

Dr Nelson: We did some work in relation to the branding exercise. As I said, I don't like that expression but people know what I am talking about. We learned from that that about 30 per cent of our visitors are people like us—relatively well educated and relatively high income—about 30 per cent are what I would describe as quintessential battlers and then there is a mix among the other 40 per cent.

If you look at our school visitation breakdown—and we have a really good grip on where they are coming from—52 per cent are coming from New South Wales, 17 per cent are coming from Victoria and six per cent are coming from Queensland. In other words, in terms of the 140,000 kids who are coming on school visits, only a tiny number are coming from Tasmania, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

The group I would particularly like to see more of at the memorial is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from remoter parts of the country. That is one of the reasons why we are currently touring 'For country, for Nation', an exhibition we built specifically to tell the story of Indigenous service over 120 years. We had a visit late last year of kids from Tennant Creek—not just Aboriginal kids but non-Aboriginal kids as well. When they came into the memorial and saw the APY Lands painting greet them opposite the Gallipoli landing boat, their eyes were like saucers. I wish we could see a lot more of that. I suspect that the adult visitors that we do see from those parts of the country are more of the grey nomad variety. Yet as anyone knows, when you go through the Roll of Honour, Aboriginal people are more than well represented among the Western Australians and the South Australians.

CHAIR: How does the PACER program interact with the War Memorial?

Dr Nelson: As you well know, the Department of Education and Training overseas the PACER program. It provides, on a scaled basis, a subsidy of up to $150 per student depending on where they come from. From my
perspective, if you look at the outcome in terms of where the kids are actually coming from, it is failing. Ms Bennie told me only yesterday that a lot of the relatively high-fee independent schools don't even bother to apply for it because the amount of money involved is not worth the effort. I'm sure that is a generalisation that doesn't apply to all of them. In an ideal world, there would obviously be more money committed to the PACER program, but I would like to see it disproportionately and unashamedly focused on kids from remote parts of the country that are far distant from Canberra and particularly those from lower SES groups. If we can have a school funding model that is able to fund schools based on SES scores then it should be possible to link PACER subsidies for schools according to that and then add to that their geographic distance from Canberra.

**CHAIR:** Absolutely. Is visitation to the War Memorial required under the PACER program?

**Dr Nelson:** It is.

**CHAIR:** And you still have low visitation from places like Queensland?

**Ms Bennie:** That's right.

**CHAIR:** Then that is a very good indication of failure.

**Dr Nelson:** It is.

**Ms Bennie:** Something we are most proud of is what we call our facilitation rate. Under the PACER program, you have to come to the Australian Memorial but that doesn't mean you have to undertake a program at the Australian Memorial like you do at Parliament House with the Parliamentary Education Office. We are up at around 92 per cent where we have facilitated. That means people with schoolchildren coming to the War Memorial are actually undertaking a curriculum link program. That is really important to us because it means they are getting a program of learning that is consistent with other schools and it is directly linked back into programs. I am talking about year 5 and 6 students.

**CHAIR:** What is the difference between a year 6 student visiting the War Memorial to satisfy the PACER program in the most shallow way and conducting a program? What does that look and feel like? What are the two different—

**Ms Bennie:** If you come as 'self-guided', you are coming beneath your teacher and just looking through our galleries—and the teacher, with whatever knowledge they have, is able to take that through.

**CHAIR:** That is more than likely just running around and walking out?

**Ms Bennie:** Essentially—not knowing exactly what to see and not necessarily knowing that the amount of time they are allocating is appropriate. In a lot of ways, it is running a supervision job for the children—which is certainly something we encourage so that we can balance the high visitation within the galleries—as well as trying to undertake whatever sort of learning that may be. That might be bringing their own worksheets or what have you. But such is the strength of the program that the educator to student ratio is quite strong. We have small concentrated groups that are able to easily move around our galleries despite our high visitation and conduct in-depth analysis of talking about the objects, which is why object based museum teaching is so important.

**CHAIR:** Do those additional programs come at additional cost?

**Ms Bennie:** There is a small cost attached to them.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** How much is it?

**Ms Bennie:** I think it is around $5 a student.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** I ask because everyone thinks you get the baseline version but if you want something a bit more interesting then you have to pay a bit extra. At Questacon you have to pay extra. At the War Memorial Discovery Centre you have to pay extra. For families who are doing it tough, sending their child up to Canberra for a whole week is an expensive exercise. With that subsidy and all the add-ons, it gets expensive. It is possibly a disincentive, particularly for low-socioeconomic households.

**Ms Bennie:** That's right. From a teacher perspective, they are going to want to have an additional program because it benefits the education experience.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** It links into the curriculum so, yes, it gets a tick.

**Dr Nelson:** The maximum subsidy on PACER is $150, which is a lot of money to any of us. These young kids come from Far North Queensland—not often enough—remote parts of Western Australia and the northern part of South Australia. You can tell by the way they addressed and so on that they come from a modest background. The parents are truck drivers and shop assistants and that kind of thing. A subsidy of $150 to get them to Canberra is greatly appreciated but seriously inadequate. You can only imagine the sacrifices these parents have made to get those kids to Canberra. As you would know, I am on the record as being a very strong defender of Catholic and
independent school education. But when you see a disproportionate number of kids coming from those parts of the country in nice school uniforms and not so many coming from not so affluent school environments, you realise that the system is not working the way it should. In particular, when you go down the Roll of Honour and look at all the names, you realise that a lot of the men and women who are on that Roll of Honour came from those parts of the country and also from low-income backgrounds.

Ms BRODTMANN: Absolutely. You have a breakdown of the states and territories, but do you have a breakdown of the schools?

Dr Nelson: Yes, we do. We of course know exactly which school is booking in. We would have to compile that information for the committee.

Ms BRODTMANN: Would that be too resource intensive?

Ms Bennie: No. Each month we tell our minister which schools are visiting, so it is no problem to pull that information together.

CHAIR: Do you want the actual schools or do you want the categories?

Ms Bennie: It will have the school name.

Ms BRODTMANN: Whatever is easier for you.

CHAIR: Okay, for the last 12 months would be good.

Ms BRODTMANN: Absolutely. You have a breakdown of the states and territories, but do you have a breakdown of the schools?

CHAIR: Before we get into government funding and private funding opportunities, what objectives are not being currently met by the War Memorial that you think are hampering your telling of the story you seek to tell?

Dr Nelson: Our most significant challenge is lack of space. The government, with the support of the opposition, has provided us now in total $17.4 million, in two tranches, to produce and complete a detailed business case for an expansion to the Australian War Memorial. We will complete that process for about $10 million, and we will be ready for second pass by early December this year. That process is well advanced. We don't know what the outcome will be, of course; it will be a matter for the government as to whether it will be supported or not. That's our No. 1 priority.

Our No. 2 priority, which has been addressed—albeit in a bit of a piecemeal way in the last few years, is the impact of the efficiency dividend. The ASL cap has had quite a significant and not positive impact on the memorial and on operations. We've responded to that in part by becoming much more efficient—our productivity has increased substantially in the last few years—and also moving to contracted staff in part as well as doing a lot more fundraising in the nongovernment sector, which I confess I would be doing anyway no matter what the level of government appropriation.

CHAIR: Dr Nelson, just on that point: we learnt from another institution that when you fundraise from the nongovernment sector and you receive a grant of some sort, you are still having to deal with the ASL cap, which then puts a restriction on your ability to then utilise or spend those funds. I can understand why the ASL cap is there, but if the government is also encouraging institutions to identify private sources of income then shouldn't there be some encouragement to do so by adjusting the ASL cap to facilitate that and to encourage those organisations to do that further?

Dr Nelson: Yes. Definitely.

CHAIR: Have you experienced that issue yourself?

Dr Nelson: Ms Bennie can tell you one example from amongst many.

Ms Bennie: We've got a current proposal to look at a veterans' engagement program. We mentioned to the committee that we're looking at out-of-hours, lower audio level type programs for veterans. We have a particular external company that is willing to consider the funding of a multiyear program, but we would have to bring those staff on to run that multiyear program. With all of that corporate memory and the investment that we make and then staffing it, via an agency, so in fact paying a premium, it means there's more money coming out of the overall budget for such a program. Similarly, using IT contractors around 360-degree virtual experience means you are paying a quite expensive labour hire rate to attract the right individuals with the right skills to support us on those sorts of projects, as opposed to the War Memorial being able to offer even a 12-month or an 18-month contract for those individuals. They're some examples.

CHAIR: You are holding a collection, and that's an important part and that's a percentage of the work that you do, but what's the distinction between your role in holding the collection and displaying the exhibitions? How do
you balance those two objectives? Are they there, or are they separate? Is your job just to display everything that you've got, or is your job to also keep the collection?

**Dr Nelson:** The Australian War Memorial is a unique institution. We are a shrine, so we are a memorial, a place of national commemoration, a sacred place. We're also a museum. And then we are an archive. In relation to the archive, and certainly for the museum, we have a collection. Everything that we do, in terms of exhibitions, is based on our collection. Nothing that is presented by us is a replica; it's based on an original object or artefact.

We have about four million objects in our collection. Like most institutions, at any one time we're probably exhibiting about four or five per cent of it. Now that collection needs to be conserved, it needs to be maintained, but we also need to be acquiring new things. Our basic government appropriation, which has basically been static in my five-year tenure—in fact, it's probably dropped a bit because of the efficiency dividend—is about $38 million. We have about $7.3 million that is for the collection, development and acquisition budget. Now as I say that to you, you're thinking, 'That must mean for buying stuff and kind of polishing it and looking after it.' And, yes, that's basically what it's for. We have a huge collection and it's deteriorating, so the stuff is wearing out; no matter how much conservation is put into, it's deteriorating, particularly textiles and artworks and things like that. In 2011 the government decided that no longer would we be supplemented for depreciation, so no longer can we receive any money for our depreciation to offset that. Our collection, development and acquisition budget has been maintained at $7.3 million and it has been subject to the efficiency dividend.

At the same time we've negotiated an enterprise agreement with our staff, which is six per cent over the three years—we structured it slightly differently. We have 60 staff whose job it is to look after the collection. So what's happening is the amount of money that we actually have to buy things is shrinking, because within that fixed collection, development and acquisition budget—subject to the efficiency dividend and with a not excessive salary increase for staff—the amount of money left to actually buy stuff is shrinking. Now it's down to $400,000. So what will happen is members of parliament, apart from anything else, will say: 'Dr Nelson, you've got to go and buy that Victoria Cross. You've got to go and acquire this, whatever it is.' Well that'd be terrific if the budget that we're actually given to do it at least maintains some semblance of capacity to allow us to do it. And then I say to others, 'But don't turn around and criticise me if I then go and find a private person or a corporation or somewhere else to get the money to go and buy the artwork or whatever object or artefact that it is.' Do you get my point?

**CHAIR:** So your ability to collect and build the collection is at risk?

**Dr Nelson:** It is. If it continues the way it is then it is at risk. We rely very heavily on the generosity of individuals, a whole range of people, of bequests, of donations, of corporate partners. But the nation, through the government of the day, needs to ask whether this is a sustainable basis upon which to continue to proceed.

**CHAIR:** You mentioned members of parliament. I'm not familiar with the board of the memorial. The Library has a member and a senator on its board. Do you have members of parliament on your board at all?

**Dr Nelson:** No. We have an ex-member of parliament as the director. We're governed by our own act, the Australian War Memorial Act 1980. We're also subject to the PGPA Act and we also, clearly, work under the guidance of the NCA. We have up to 13 members on our council. The chiefs respectively of Navy, Army and Air Force are ex-officio on the council, and the government has worked assiduously to ensure that there is an appropriate number of people appointed to council who have accounting, business and financial skills and expertise. But there aren't currently any serving members of parliament on it.

**CHAIR:** Dr Nelson, reflecting on your role now, but also on your previous life when you were a member of parliament and not a member of the executive, would you see an advantage to having, like some of the other institutions, two members of parliament on the council of the War Memorial, from the perspective of both the memorial and those members of parliament that may serve?

**Dr Nelson:** I can only offer a personal opinion. I can see advantages and disadvantages. I would have to ask, 'What's the problem we're trying to fix?' The War Memorial is a place that is free of party politics; it's free of race; it's free of religion. In death everyone is equal; there is no rank, no military honours. In the 5½ years that I've been the director I've had the privilege to serve and report to council members, including ex-members of parliament, from both sides. I think it works very well. Some of the deliberations of the council are particularly sensitive, and I personally wouldn't be recommending that the benefits of appointing serving MPs or senators to it would outweigh the downside.

**Ms BROSHTANN:** Thanks very much for your paper and your submission and also appearing today. Going back to that budget issue, I think it was the library and the archives who mentioned the fact that the ASL is causing problems, particularly when they get funding from the private sector—it's difficult to spend—as is the
efficiency dividend. One of the other issues that was raised was this notion of the lumpiness of funding coming in. With the archives and the National Film and Sound Archive, one year it was at a particular level, then there was a decrease, then it went back up again, and then there was a decrease over time. Do you get that lumpiness of government funding? Is it having an impact? You're talking about the need for funding at a sustainable pace. Is that because of lumpiness or just to meet capacity?

**Dr Nelson:** There are two things. We have been subject to the efficiency dividend. In 2011, following a review of the War Memorial by the Department of Finance, of all people, the War Memorial's budget was increased $8.3 million. In the last five years we have lost $7.9 million from the efficiency dividend and to the end of the estimates period it will amount to $10.2 million. That has obviously had an impact. However, the government has been very responsive to us. In the 2016-17 MYEFO we were given $4 million to essentially allow us to cope with significantly increasing demand for services, which offset the impact of efficiency dividend. That of course is $4 million over four years, so in the 2020-21 budget year we fall off a cliff. We're very appreciative this year to have received $8.2 million over the estimates to support digitisation, and we've also received $4.9 million over this and the next financial year to stabilise our operations as a part of the impact of the efficiency dividend and also, seriously, the unprecedented demand that we've got at the moment.

So lumpiness to us has generally been of a beneficial nature, because the government has actually responded. Also, we've just been advised that we are to receive another eight ASL for this year and we'll go to 12 ASL additional next year, which will take us back to where we were a decade ago, by the way. So from our point of view the blindsiding of the efficiency dividend has had a quite a significant and unexpected impact on us. Early in my tenure we coped. I didn't mind it too much, because any organisation can always be more efficient, but we've now reached a point where we are struggling to meet demand.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** So what is your advice to this committee? Abolish the efficiency dividend on national institutions?

**Dr Nelson:** Realistic advice? I think it's unlikely that any government, whether it be a coalition or Labor government, is going to resist temptation on the efficiency dividend. But what is absolutely critically important, and in this case I know I can speak for all of the culture institutions, is that if you are a small institution where you have to provide public events and ceremonies, where you have to have people that are experts in knowing how to polish a helmet or who have three degrees in how to hang up picture, you cannot cope with efficiency dividends being applied to those relatively small institutions that have 150 to 300 employees and expect not to have a general detrimental impact on where we started, that is, national identity.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Very quickly on the ANAO report that came out last week: you agreed with all the recommendations. There was just one that I must admit I was a bit surprised about. From memory it was about KPIs. This is an issue I discussed with the gallery as well—that there wasn't any reporting or clarity around your KPIs. I'm going to the recommendations now. I'll just go through the ones that relate to you, then we'll come to that KPI issue. You've got the collection management frameworks, and the recommendation about identifying policies and plans, because that wasn't clear; assessing and filling the gaps; establishing a structured and regular system of review; and developing arrangements to provide ongoing and consistent storage. You've agreed with that.

**Dr Nelson:** Yes.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Can you give us an update in terms of a time line and, very briefly, what you're doing to address that?

**Dr Nelson:** It's in our business plan for this year. I'll let General Dawson explain.

**Major Gen. Dawson:** The core of that recommendation around documentation was what we call the collection development plan. The current version is 2012. It needs to be reviewed.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** They made that point.

**Major Gen. Dawson:** That's something that we will be embarking on very shortly. That's really the document which gives us the guidelines for what we are collecting and what we aren't going to be collecting. We will need to update that and incorporate the potential major redevelopment of the memorial. If we get more exhibition space we will need to be focusing on what collection areas we need to be looking at, and also more recent conflicts. The collection is very strong on the First World War and Second World War, light on Korea, and there are other gaps, particularly more recently. As we've seen with the more recent special exhibitions such as the For Country, for Nation on Indigenous service, and the ones that are there at the moment on Special Forces, that's opened up a whole new area which we need to be to be looking at.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** Do you have a time line?
Major Gen. Dawson: We'll be starting that very shortly.

Ms BRODTMANN: Is there a deadline?

Major Gen. Dawson: It will take about 12 months to go through. It's quite a significant piece of work.

Ms BRODTMANN: So mid next year.


Ms BRODTMANN: The other recommendation was about reviewing and updating—the collection development plan, that's the same sort of thing.


Ms BRODTMANN: A structured process for collection development and the acquisition statement. That's all been captured in that. That's all good. The whole of life costs of acquisitions—is that going to be incorporated into that plan?

Major Gen. Dawson: Over the last four years or so we've centralised our acquisitions processes. We get around 40,000 or 50,000 items per year offered for donation. We take around 20,000 against the guidelines that are set. We also purchase at auction or in other ways. The other way we acquire material is through commissions, typically in the artistic area and sometimes in the photo, film and sound area. We've centralised all those processes into one small team, which is around five people. That's enabled us to deal with what was quite a significant backlog which had built up over the years in an area that had been under-resourced. It also put in place some really solid processes. We used to bring and have dropped off donations and we wound up with storerooms full of stuff that we were still processing years afterward. We've now basically got a process where we're able to turn around a donation for the offer. Most of them come in through a web portal, so people write out what they've got, send us photographs and we do most of the initial assessments off site, without the item actually coming in.

When we say we're really interested in something, it comes to the site and has that final assessment. We'll be looking at things like whether it has potential hazards—asbestos, radiation, those sorts of things. That has enabled us to squeeze the process, which in some stages took several years, down to three months, which is our benchmark. Not surprisingly, if you maintain contact with donors, when you send them the final form, the deed of gift when they transfer ownership, they're excellent at turning it round in a couple of days and sending it back. So that's been a really good example of improving processes, using technology and using the available staff—you can imagine there's a lot of expertise involved in this—in what is now a very efficient process.

Ms BRODTMANN: In that process do you also incorporate the maintenance and sustainment? I'm talking defence procurement speak here. As you know, that's where the money usually is. Is that incorporated into that? That is truly whole of life.

Major Gen. Dawson: We need to do some more in that area. What is the whole of life? When we think about our whole life, it's forever. Typically with large items like aircraft it's the cost of getting it there and delivery. Then there is the ongoing maintenance. With vehicles, for example, you need to drain their oil and have a cyclical maintenance program. Textiles, in particular, are very fragile and need to be kept in a highly controlled environment, and they need a regular regime of inspection. So we'll be looking to incorporate those in the acquisition decisions.

Ms BRODTMANN: Would that be part of this collection process?

Major Gen. Dawson: The collection development plan is more about the decision to acquire, but we need to incorporate that management aspect and also the whole-of-life cost. If we've got something that is going to require a special controlled environment that we don't have and that we would have to build, there's obviously a substantial cost involved. We are dealing with legacy issues, particularly around hazards such as asbestos. Forty years ago no one worried about asbestos at all. We've been collecting for over 100 years. So there are some legacy issues we still need to deal with.

CHAIR: Do you have anything you would like to add, Dr Nelson?

Dr Nelson: I would offer two suggestions. One of the major challenges for this nation is digitisation of collections, not just in our national cultural institutions but throughout the country. I think there would be immense benefit in having a competitive funding pool for digitisation, which would be in addition to the base-load funding into institutions, something a bit like the Australian Research Council or NHMRC, for example, to give us an opportunity to prioritise and fund high-quality digitisation projects wherever they're occurring.

The second point is that I think as a nation we're failing ourselves in not telling the story of what we do to actually prevent conflict; what we do as a nation in diplomacy to create peace, to maintain peace and to prevent conflict. I would welcome the day that any Australian government, for example, was to provide a mission to the
Museum of Australian Democracy and the funding in support of it for it to be the museum for Australian democracy and Australian diplomacy. The only people that are aware of what actually is done in the diplomatic corps to prevent conflict and create peace are those who have the privilege to go through the RG Casey Building and see the snapshots of history by prime ministers, foreign ministers, diplomats and a whole range of people in this country who are preventing conflict. To that end we will have a temporary exhibition open late next year along this line, but I think I think we need to be telling our story.

CHAIR: Why do you suggest MOAD as opposed to the War Memorial?

Dr Nelson: Because if you think about the fundamental values that underpin who we are—we've just seen this big debate about Western civilisation, for example, which is ongoing—it is the belief that we're all created equal, that we all have an equal voice, that we live by truths that are worth fighting to defend, which include the very principles of democracy. If you think about the symmetry of this parliament to Anzac Parade, the Australian War Memorial and then the Museum of Australian Democracy—which is an outstanding facility and museum, by the way—I can certainly imagine that complementing these democratic principles by which we live, which we seek to uphold in our region and further afield, to tell the stories of what Australian governments and our diplomats have done for decades, which is stunning. One of the reasons why Australians find it very easy for governments to cut DFAT budgets is because they don't really understand what it does and what it achieves for our nation. I'll leave it at that.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for your attendance here today. If you've been asked to provide any additional information please do so to the secretary by Friday 6 July 2018. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and you'll have an opportunity to request corrections to transcription errors.
CHAIR: I now welcome the representatives of the National Gallery of Australia, the National Museum of Australia and the National Portrait Gallery of Australia to give evidence today. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise that this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and therefore has the same standing as proceedings in the respective houses. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The evidence given today attracts parliamentary privilege. The deputy chair and I have been charged to collect evidence on behalf of our committee for our inquiry. I invite you to make a brief opening statement before we commence our discussion.

Mr Trumble: It is a great pleasure to be here. Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to come. Having studied your terms of reference, I believe the National Portrait Gallery is doing good work in many of the areas that you have highlighted as of particular interest to the committee. We are unusual in being by far the smallest of the national collecting agencies, with only 49 staff at present levels. I am very proud of the quality of the programs that we succeed in delivering in a very tight structural and financial environment.

Above all, we have established partnerships, of which I am particularly proud, with Canberra Symphony Orchestra and with the National Film and Sound Archive to deliver programs that are quite innovative. It is notoriously difficult to attract audiences to programs, concerts and new music, let alone new Australian music. The fact that we sold out a concert of new Australian music in our Australian serious with the CSO is a matter for great celebration. The NFSA and the NPG have mounted as equal partners an exhibition drawn from their collection staged under our aegis and which will tour in two forms: one which requires museum conditions and the other which can be staged really anywhere—church halls, community centres—all over the country and that we are very proud of too. It is a very innovative program. So we feel the NPG is in a good state.

Dr Trinca: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and for the interest of the committee of inquiry. Like my colleague, we are very pleased and delighted by the successes of the museum in recent years. We start from a fundamental premise, really, that the story of this nation is something that we believe in deeply in all its variation and richness. It's a remarkable story, from the first people stretching back many thousands of years to having welcomed in the last 250 years people from more than 200 nations on earth. That's a story that's important for us as Australians and for our sense of belonging and membership in this national community, but it's also an important part of a global storytelling about the human condition. That's something that we are very committed to—if you like, those twin planks in telling the story of the nation in all its richness and diversity.

In recent years—in 2016-17, in fact—our visitor engagements totalled more than two million, aside from web visits. Almost half of those engagements occurred outside Canberra. So while we had very strong and growing visitor engagement at our Canberra site, we're delighted to see that the reach of the organisation across the country, through touring exhibitions and other programming and indeed overseas internationally, has delivered as much visitation to our programs as at Canberra, our strong hub from which we initiate our programming. At the same time, this year the page views on our website and the capacity people have to visit the museum virtually has grown to the point that more than five million visits have been made to that site.

In recent years two of our major homegrown blockbuster exhibitions on Australian themes—Encounters, which was undertaken with the British Museum in 2015; and Songlines, which is the exhibition we just closed over the summer—have both won national awards for the best exhibitions made by any museum or gallery in the country, of which we are very pleased. In 2016 we won the ICOM Award for the quality of our international work and the relationships that we have around the world.

Since about 2015 more than 25 countries around the world who have been visited by our displays or exhibitions. We have a groundbreaking package of digital displays that are supplied to Australian missions showing Australian content to people wherever they are around the world. Next month, in fact, we have a major
exhibition of some of the treasures of this nation, bark paintings from Arnhem Land, that will open at the National Museum of China in Tiananmen Square in Beijing before proceeding on a tour throughout the country.

Our plans for the future culminate in a desire to see the exhibition space at the museum grow. It may interest you to know that at just over 6,000 square meters we would be the smallest of the national museums known around the world. By comparison, the Australian War Memorial has about 13,000 square metres of display space—more than twice as much—and Te Papa, the Museum of New Zealand, with whom we might reasonably imagine to at least compare—

CHAIR: Or be better than!

Dr Trinca: has about 11,000 square meters of display space. Clearly, to adequately represent the strengths and the vitality of our national story through our collection, we need more display space.

In common with my colleagues, the impact of the efficiency dividend is something that the organisation has been challenged by and has met. It has met that by being ever more inventive and innovative in the way that it has raised funds, but there is no doubt that continued investment of the sort that we need right across the cultural sector is necessary for us to realise the full extent of our master plan, which is inclusive of that aim of doubling the size of the museum.

Can I say in culmination about this that I think the great opportunity for institutions—I commend my colleague Angus Trumble for this as well—lies in greater collaboration between us. We represent a considerable Commonwealth investment as a suite of institutions both within our portfolio and beyond, and I think the capacity we have for collaboration and common endeavour is great. The museum, to that end, was supported by government last financial year to the tune of almost $9 million to establish a cultural facilities shared services centre, and I must say that I am very grateful to my colleagues in the other institutions for their participation in that scheme. That is helping to realise material benefits and free up spend for public-facing programs within those institutions by the sharing of corporate services between us. I do think that that's important as we try to realise this desire to reach publics right across the nation and to involve them in a great sense of nation and national meaning, to accent the sense of belonging that we have as a people, especially in this age, when it seems it's never been more important.

Can I also say that I think that all these agencies have a key role to play in the emerging knowledge economy. We have to recognise that arts and culture is not just about Friday night; it's about the core business of nation as we try and build our creative industries. The creative industries sector, the Asia-Pacific, is the most valuable anywhere in the world. An EY study in 2015 showed that the value of the creative industries in this region surpasses that of North America, of Europe, of any other region around the world, at about $750 billion out of a worldwide total of about US$2.2 trillion. That's a massive opportunity for this country. It is one that the national institutions can play a central role in helping to exploit, but it will require government investment of the kinds that I and my colleagues would advocate for in the course of this inquiry and beyond. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Vaughan?

Mr Vaughan: Thank you very much. We too are very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about the issues that face us and also to give some insights into how the National Gallery of Australia works. In common with my two colleagues, we too are very supportive of the concept of collaboration, shared services, and we're working as part of this part of those groups. Our submission itself covers the key areas of what we do, responds to the terms of reference and talks about our mission and vision. So I won't go into that in detail; I think we can take that for granted. But I will make a few general points, just to set the tone for the discussion that will come.

We really are very much about developing our national collection, showing it, connecting it with the country in a whole range of different ways and sharing it beyond our own country—I think that's very important. Research and education are absolutely crucial, including remote connection, particularly from an educational point of view. We've got a very good track record over nearly 40 years. We do have the largest fine art collection in the country. In fact, it's bigger than the entire collection of the National Gallery of Victoria and the entire collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and there's still some space after that, and that does impact upon issues of funding and space. I'll come onto that in a moment, but it's worth keeping it in keeping in mind.

We are here to hold and display an aspect of Australia's cultural history, and that's to say our visual culture in particular, and we too play a key role, along with all the other agencies, in really standing for and explaining the national identity. Visitors can come to the National Gallery of Australia and go away with a great knowledge of our national identity, looking at the Australian collections, the Indigenous collections that we have, which are remarkable, and of course the international collections, because we certainly see the international collections as a very important part of what we do and they connect us and Australians with our own region, particularly the Asia-
Pacific. But, of course, we go we go far beyond that. We do have also—if I can keep referring to a little bit of hyperbole—what is recognised as the largest and the best Indigenous collection in the world, and we do see it as a special responsibility to grow that collection and to share it, because we see the concept of sharing as absolutely central to everything that we do. We've recently given new emphasis to contemporary art, both Australian and global contemporary art. And if our funding position improves in years to come, we have some interesting ideas and plans in that area.

Every year we send out well over a thousand loans; the average is about 1,200 or 1,400. This last year in fact we have loaned 1,600 works of art to regional galleries throughout Australia through travelling exhibitions, to the state galleries and to overseas. In the last financial year—we worked it out quite carefully—if you include individual works, but we often lend groups of works to exhibitions, throughout Australia and throughout the world about four million people stood in front of works of art that belong to the National Gallery of Australia, and we're really proud of that, I have to say. The travelling exhibitions program has been going now for a couple of decades, and we particularly target smaller regional centres. For us it's not about numbers. We actually seek to send works to small communities that would not normally have access to the national collection. Either later this year or early next year—we're waiting to see what happens—the 11 millionth regional visitor will come to one of the National Gallery of Australia's travelling exhibitions. It's a very, very important part.

We do collect and display the work, as I've said, of the rest of the world, with a particular emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region, and for us cultural diplomacy is very important. We've worked with our own department and with DFAT to send exhibitions to other parts of the world, as of course have my colleagues, especially the National Museum. Only last week our deputy director, Kirsten, was in New Delhi to open a major exhibition of Indigenous Australian art, and that's a very important step for us to take, because our relationship with India, for a whole range of reasons, is a very important one. And a slightly smaller version of that exhibition opened in Berlin at the end of last year, and that was a big success too. So we're taking Australian visual culture to the world, and we do see that as part of what we're here to do.

I will just make a general comment about our funding issues, because I'm sure that in this discussion I can drill down into some of the detail, which you may be interested to have. But, in common with all the other agencies, we have had a very difficult few years and indeed a very difficult few decades, but I'll give you some detail on that later on. I think that our hope, in common with many of the others, is that some way could be found to relieve the smaller agencies—and what number of employees, ASL, that might be, it's not for me to propose, but maybe under 300; that's a separate issue. The removal of staff in these smaller agencies has a particularly serious impact, and we've had to suffer from that in recent years. Of course, the big one that occurred at the end of 2015 required from all of us—it was across of course the whole of the APS—some very, very specific reactions. We've come out of it very well. Through this period in fact, over the last three years, the visitation of the NGA has gone from under 300; that's a separate issue. The removal of staff in these smaller agencies has a particularly serious impact, and we've had to suffer from that in recent years. Of course, the big one that occurred at the end of 2015 required from all of us—it was across of course the whole of the APS—some very, very specific reactions. We've come out of it very well. Through this period in fact, over the last three years, the visitation of the NGA has gone from under 300; that's a separate issue. The removal of staff in these smaller agencies has a particularly serious impact, and we've had to suffer from that in recent years. Of course, the big one that occurred at the end of 2015 required from all of us—it was across of course the whole of the APS—some very, very specific reactions. We've come out of it very well. Through this period in fact, over the last three years, the visitation of the NGA has gone from about 630,000 a year through the front door to nearly 900,000. By the end of next weekend it's possible that we'll just nudge 900,000. We're very pleased about that, for a Canberra institution. But, as I said, I'll come on to some details of that later on.

What we really would like to feel—and I did hear the end of the discussion with Brendan Nelson—what is important is certainty of planning; therefore, to know that, if the efficiency dividend can be removed from the arts agencies, we have certainty for our planning processes. We know that there's not going to be another surprise around the corner which will throw everything into chaos again. So we would certainly say that, if the efficiency dividend could be lifted, we would be absolutely delighted. Give us a baseline, give us CPI, and we'll do everything in our power to do the rest. We have a very strong track record in raising non-government money. In the last year about 42 per cent of the gross revenues of the National Gallery of Australia were nongovernment. But we need to make a distinction between operating and capital, and a certain proportion of that 42 per cent is the value of donated works of art, which we're delighted to have, but they're not cash.

Ms BRODTMANN: And they cost too.

Mr Vaughan: Absolutely. Of course, there is a cost associated with them. I'm sure we'll come to all this, but I suppose what we're really saying is: if we can be liberated in this way, it will give us a tremendous base on which to go forward—a base with certainty.

In terms of space, just picking up again my colleague's comment, we certainly are planning for a new storage area—that's essential—and that came up in the ANAO report. For many years we've been talking about the need for a new wing for the NGA. In 2010 we opened, of course, the Indigenous wing, which had a new foyer and spaces that we could rent and earn income from. Now we do need to expand. Of all the galleries in Australia, as I mentioned before, we've got by far the biggest collection. But, if you take the major institutions, particularly those in Sydney, in Melbourne and in Brisbane, we have by far the smallest building. It's a real problem for us, because
we cannot do justice to the national collections. We try and we try; we turn things over now more regularly than we did in the past, but that costs more money and puts more pressure on staff, but that's the best way we can respond to this chronic lack of space—and it is chronic.

We need better for the national collection, and that feeds into the educational role that we can play for visitors to Canberra and visiting school groups. We've got some really good ideas for the future, so I think we're feeling very positive about everything. Perhaps if I have one message to deliver in this discussion it is just if we could be relieved of the impact and effect of the efficiency dividend.

CHAIR: Understood. I'd like to open up. These questions are going to sound naive. I mean them to, because I'd like to step away from individual institutions. Many of you have actually addressed these in your opening statements, which is good. What is the strategic importance, the national importance, of the existence of these institutions? Why does it matter if they're there or not? That's why I said the questions sound naive. My view is that we need to talk about their importance in the strategic sense of having greater understanding of our nation's story, and many of you have raised today the international aspects of that, which hadn't occurred to me before now, but why is it important?

Dr Trinca: I think there's never been a more important time, when you look at the global flow of ideas and the discourses that are available now through the internet, for people to consume, particularly young people in our country. Without a sense of belonging, without a sense of national meaning and a sense that our country matters on the global stage, which draws in the aspects in the natural relationship that we've been speaking about, I think it's very hard for people to negotiate the kind of terrain that we have ahead. I think we all know that, if you feel centred and you feel a sense of where you are and what the meaning of that is, our lives proceed in a very different way from how they would otherwise, and that's true of our membership of the national community. I do see the capacity that Australia has to tell its story abroad is in the national interest, in terms of our economic trade and strategic relationships, but it's also important for Australians to see that their story is a part of a global human record and to understand what we give the world in terms of its capacity to tell the story of humanity in all its richness and diversity. And, God knows, every time we're overseas—I'm sure this is true of my colleagues—we're asked about it incessantly: how has Australia managed what it has managed over the course of recent years? Who are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of our country? I think, when Australians see us being on the front foot and actually expressing those ideas of nation and who we are as a community in all its variation and richness, then it does something for us materially. But it also does something in terms of extolling the virtues of our national story domestically as well. So the two are tied, and I do think that you're right: this is the great question about why our institutions exist and what we believe we give the nation that nowhere else does.

CHAIR: This is a roundtable hearing. It's designed that, if somebody has said something you disagree with, you put your hand up and say so. If somebody says something and you very much do agree with them or want to reinforce the point, it's not the usual hearing style. What is the impact on a citizen who comes to your institutions and the variety of the institutions? What kind of citizen are they when they leave after visiting a series of institutions here in Canberra? And compare that to a citizen who doesn't have that opportunity, who doesn't come, who doesn't get to experience a variety of your institutions. What's the difference in those two citizens?

Mr Vaughan: First, might I say I agree with every word that Dr Trinca has just said. Take it for granted that it was a very, very helpful and clear and concise position to set out about what we do. Visiting a museum of art like the NGA, the first thing you see when you walk in is the Aboriginal Memo, which is good. I'd like to open up. These questions are going to sound naive. I mean them to, because I'd like to step away from individual institutions. Many of you have actually addressed these in your opening statements, which is good. What is the strategic importance, the national importance, of the existence of these institutions? Why does it matter if they're there or not? That's why I said the questions sound naive. My view is that we need to talk about their importance in the strategic sense of having greater understanding of our nation's story, and many of you have raised today the international aspects of that, which hadn't occurred to me before now, but why is it important?

Ms BRODTMANN: And fabulous.
Mr Vaughan: And fabulous. I will actually go back to 1966, if I might, just for a moment. I can talk for hours but I won't. I'll close this down in a moment. In 1967 the governor of Australia—we just had the 40th anniversary—took the decision to have an Australian Council and a National Gallery of Australia. That came from the Lindsay report, which was brought down in 1966—the year before. Whether or not we should have a national gallery for Australia was a big argument. I've been researching this a little bit myself. What's the point, in a paddock on the edge of Lake Burley Griffin, of having a great art gallery? Why would we do it when we've got, for example, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, which has the riches of the Felton bequest? There were serious debates about whether or not there should be a national takeover of the National Gallery of Victoria, which would have been quite good in terms of the title I must say, but I'll move on from that.

One of the really interesting things about the Lindsay report was it said that we must connect with our own region and it set out to say that it's not only about Australia and Australian visual culture; it's about introducing Australians—and this was really radical for the time—to the art of the Pacific. We've got to go out and collect the art of the Pacific nations—and we've got fabulous collections. We've then got to collect South-East Asia and South Asia. To a certain extent, we'll leave the great Chinese and Japanese collections to the historic galleries in Melbourne and Sydney, although we collect everything of course.

My feeling about the citizenship issue is that you come out with a sense of excitement, 'Wow, this is my country'. You have all the great Federation landscapes and you think about the moment of Federation you think about colonisation the gold rush—whatever you want to think about. There's something there, depending on your teacher, but you also come out realising that we're part of the global humanity and we are a great multinational country, and it's wonderful to see. With school groups you can very often tell where kids or their parents might have come from and that wonderful sense of the multinational aspect of Australia as school groups wander through. So that's my answer, I think.

CHAIR: So pride, inclusion—

Mr Vaughan: Understanding.

Mr Trumble: I fully endorse the remarks of both my colleagues. I will go back even further and make the point that in 1824 when a site was chosen to establish the National Gallery in London, an institution from which, to some degree, many of us are descended directly. The choice of site was Trafalgar Square specifically because it was close enough to east London for the poorest Londoners to walk there and easily accessible by coach for the richest Londoners to drive there. But that upon arrival everybody would gain access, mount the steps and enter the National Gallery on an equal footing, free of charge, in perpetuity to be transformed by the power of original works of art. That was a founding principle of that great institution, and it's one that I often feel needs to be reiterated.

This was 1824, the unreformed House of Commons, nevertheless, created something quite new with a socially transformative power from which we are, to some degree, descended. Equity of access is a very important principle that all of us, I think, subscribe to. Ideally, we belong to the people of Australia and we provide access to everybody. Art, in our case, is for everybody and material culture is for everybody. If the academy gives a different impression, we try and counteract that. I'm always struck and heartened when people say to me that they've found their visit to be enjoyable, stimulating and that it stimulated their sense of national identity. But crucially, access free of charge to everybody no matter who they are because they are our proprietors. It's a valuable principle.

CHAIR: This is a very important segue, because what I'm trying to establish is how important it is to our citizenry that that access is there. In each of your institutions, do you survey the people that are attending your institutions? Is there a particular characteristic—education level, age, gender, postcode, ethnicity? Are there gaps that we need to address because there are significant portions of our citizens who are not getting the access that they need in order to feel that sense of pride, inclusion and place in what the national institutions are delivering?

Mr Vaughan: Chairman, can I ask my Deputy Director, who has responsibility for education programs, to comment on that?

CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Paisley: Absolutely. At the National Gallery of Australia, we obviously have a range of programs that we deliver across the nation, internationally and here in Canberra, so the visitation statistics are skewed according to what you're talking about. At the National Gallery, we service around 80,000 school visits a year and have a guiding group of over 140 guides that deliver five guiding programs a day. The programs are tailored specifically to the people who are walking through the door. Our visitation changes greatly, depending on the program. This actually goes to the heart of audience needs and visitor needs. The programs are tailored specifically to needs at
times and to a broader demographic at others. We find, for example with our major exhibition program, the visitation demographic is entirely dependent on the product or the content of the exhibition itself. For example, our summer major exhibition drew a much broader audience from the ACT region itself—70 per cent of visitors to that project were from the region here—whereas the Cartier project is drawing people from right across the country. You do see a different demographic. We saw a much more gender equality in the visitation in the summer period to what we're seeing now.

**CHAIR:** I can understand that.

**Ms Paisley:** But there is generally a skew towards women visitors. We service school groups right across the board. What we would like is to be able to offer greater subsidies to all schools to visit the national collection in the way that other institutions are able to in the ACT, such as Parliament House and the War Memorial.

**CHAIR:** We might come to the topic of pay as a separate discussion point as well.

**Dr Trinca:** There are commonalities between all of us in terms of the audience reach we have and the different groups where there is a preponderance of visitors drawn from, versus others. Like the gallery, we have a very extensive program around school visits. In any given year between 85,000 or 95,000 school students come through our doors. They are given programs in the way that my colleagues described. It's also true that in the museum there is a great emphasis on a very wide demography of interest. What I mean by that is there's not a lot of differentiation of socioeconomic strata of the draw that we would have for audiences. It's the nature of the institution that it ranges so broadly across Australian life. When you have an exhibition, such as the one we had on the Centenary of Rugby League some years ago, it sometimes draws audiences that might not otherwise have imagined themselves going to a gallery or a museum. We're very proud of that: the very, essentially, democratic nature of a museum that's dealing with the breadth of the Australian story in that way.

I say again that there are some challenges. The obvious challenge that all of us would talk about is holding young people between the ages of about 16 and 25. There is always a great hollowing out of audiences of that age group. All of us, and certainly the National Museum, now have programs devoted to trying to involve those audiences in what we do. There are nights when we open the museum. We change the quality of programming to draw people, very expressly, in the under-30 category. They have been successful in broadening the reach of institutions like ours and indeed then taking those programs across the country using digital means but also touring exhibitions. The program that is actually occurring, say, with partner institutions, of the sort that we do with the Western Australian Museum and the South Australian Museum, is one way of being able to take the story of the nation as represented by the National Museum into other quarters.

There's no doubt that those efforts are directly related to the level of resource that we have available for these sorts of activities. When we talk about the challenging circumstances that we face, I think we would all find projects—in this camp particularly—that we could pursue more assiduously save for the fact that the resources are sometimes limited.

**Ms Paisley:** I might just add that I completely agree. I think that at the Gallery we have 200,000 of our visitors participating in an event, a public program or a tour of some kind. They are walking through the door not just to look but to participate. That really goes to, I think, your previous question about the role of the museum in civic life and individuals' lives. Our idea of identity is not fixed, and the demographic of Australia is not fixed either; it's constantly changing. The great thing about our institutions is that they're sites for the exchange and creation of ideas—in our case through visual art for our visitors. The ability to nuance programming to specific audience needs is a key to the democratic underpinning of the institution.

**CHAIR:** It's interesting that one of the other witnesses this morning said that in order to attract somebody to an institution they need to see part of themselves in there. That might have been a bit general.

**Dr Trinca:** I would be surprised if we didn't all agree.

**Ms Paisley:** I think that's the truth.

**CHAIR:** That is very interesting to me. I kind of turn my attention to what sections of our Australian community I would like to see embrace and understand our national story. Perhaps I've been thinking about what groups probably don't see themselves as much within the institutions, and I think of newly arrived Australians. What strategies do you have in place in relation to encouraging newly arrived Australians and perhaps having something where they can see part of themselves to get them at least to Canberra to see those other parts as well?

**Dr Trinca:** Seeing yourself in the exhibition in the Museum or the Gallery is part of this.

**CHAIR:** That's why rugby league got an exhibition.
Dr Trinca: Yes, that's right. Great museums work by a kind of twin play of affirmation of the self. In my opinion, you need to be able to find something that you know or that resounds with you and some challenge taking you to territory that you don't know. An exhibition of the sort that we have at the moment—that joint project with the Vatican and the Sharjah Museums Authority in the Middle East, So That You Might Know Each Other, which really shows some treasures of the Islamic world drawn from those collections and, indeed, some Australian works that we've added into that collection—means that you have an audience that's wholly unlike the kind of audience that we might see for Rome, our blockbuster that's coming up in September. So there is no doubt that the quality of programming and the variation of your programming draws audiences of different kinds in the way that you've described, and I think that there's a very strong emphasis—certainly with us—on trying to ensure that the program represents the richness of this country's multicultural population. After all, it's a wonder that there are more than 200 nations or 200 languages represented in this country by virtue of the people who have made this place home from various parts of the world.

CHAIR: Do you find it difficult to attract newly arrived Australians to Canberra? Is there any research or surveys of whether or not coming to Canberra is part of their immediate plans?

Dr Trinca: I think some of the research actually shows that in fact newly arrived Australians are sometimes more likely to visit Canberra than established ones.

CHAIR: I'd be interested in that.

Ms BRODTMANN: To latch onto the identity.

Dr Trinca: For instance, the figures on Chinese inbound tourism generally—short term as well as long stays in terms of students—show that already Chinese inbound to Canberra are our strongest international market, and that exceeds the condition of Chinese tourism to Australia nationally, which is second after New Zealand. So we've already surpassed that in the national capital, and we know that the figures that we have available to us show that that number will treble. It's really a very substantial sum—I think about 1.4 million Chinese short-term tourists a year, which will rise to 4.2 million in 2025. I think there is some indication that groups from backgrounds other than the Anglo-Celtic core, if you like, find themselves really drawn to the idea of the nation's capital and are an important part of the future market here.

Ms Paisley: I might just add, one of the great things about being in Canberra is of course our consular network and the ability to work with embassies from around the world and, at the NGA, to offer our incredible premium eventing spaces to colleagues for cultural events if they are wanting to partner with us or present within the National Gallery itself. The second way in which we represent the multiculturalism of the Australian community is of course through our collections. As Gerard mentioned, we set out to represent not only the art of Australia but also the out of our region in South-East Asia, the Asia-Pacific and the great 20th and 21st century movements globally. So just thinking about the collecting work we've done in the last few months, we've collected work from the Philippines, from Indonesia, from Japan, right across the globe really, and these are works that have some resonance with the diaspora communities here in Australia as well.

Mr Vaughan: It might be worth adding an interesting footnote in terms of diversity of audience. It might sound counter intuitive but the Cartier exhibition is drawing one of the most diverse audiences we have ever had. We know, from talking to our visitors, that people who never come to museums or galleries have decided to come and see the Cartier show. That's very interesting. I agree with everything that Kirsten has just said. It is nice to see groups, sometimes national groups, who come through the Asian holdings of the NGA, and many national groups who are based in Canberra come and have events there for certain festivals, such as the Indian community. There are dance festivals and we can use the collections for other countries from South and South-East Asia.

Mr Trumble: I just go back to a point that Matt made. We too hanker after an improved degree of access to the 16 to 25 demographic—it is easier for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle than to drag them over the threshold. A hundred years ago, art museums made a radical step at the vanguard of social reform, which was to acknowledge the existence of working people by opening at the weekend. Today, if you work in a job Monday to Friday, and we open our doors at 10 o'clock in the morning and close at five, at best you have a reasonable opportunity to visit at lunchtime but you are actually more likely to be thrown back onto the weekend. My own feeling is that, thinking 20, 30, 50 years from now, we absolutely have to rethink the ways in which we open our doors to the community to take account of not only the fact that we are competing with other forms of recreation and entertainment and diversion but to break down that sense that we are really only there during working hours, when most people really have other things to do. Whether it be opening at noon and closing at eight or nine or whether it be opening 24/7, which has been attempted very successfully by institutions with major blockbuster exhibitions. There are people, believe it or not, who want to go to an exhibition at 2:30 in the morning. We have to be open to those kinds of ideas but that is something that I think all of us would welcome but it is beyond our
capacity at the moment with the kinds of funding implications that that would entail in terms of penalty rates, staffing, security requirements and so on. I think we do have to be open to a really thorough-going rethink about how we provide access to public in a time of rapidly evolving social usage. Having been at the vanguard a hundred years ago, I think we are starting to fall behind in how we see ourselves standing in respect of community access.

**Dr Trinca:** Just to endorse what my colleague says, with *A History of the World*, the exhibition that we brought from the British Museum last year, we opened over January into the evening, and I had expected that there would be strong patronage but not of the sort that we saw. I think on Australia Day we were open till midnight, and we had to usher people out at 10 to 12. The other interesting thing about it was that those non-traditional hours allowed you to reach younger people. One of the defining features of that show, for me, was that were a lot of people—perhaps counterintuitively, as my colleague was talking about—that came from the 16 to 30 age group, disproportionately from what we might have expected for an exhibition that was dealing with very strong conventions around historical understanding and a very great collection in very conventional terms. It showed me that, when the exhibition is right and when the quality of the work is very high, young people will come to these places, if you give them the opportunity for access.

**Mr Vaughan:** Thank you very much.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** I just want to make a comment, because unfortunately I don't have time to ask any detailed questions. Just getting back to that access issue, you make a very good point in terms of the fact that nearly 200 years on from that original concept in Trafalgar Square, we do need to look at new ways of access, but it's not just in terms of youth, absolutely. I'm thinking about going right back to that East London group. One of the most powerful exhibitions I've seen in a very long time was *Dempsey's People*.

**Mr Trumble:** Thank you very much.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** I loved that exhibition so much I went three times. I don't know whether anyone saw it, but it was miniatures of a very colourful collection of people. Just the story about how it came into being was extraordinary—how you managed to get those very special treasures, the fact that they were held by one person for so long and no-one knew about it. It was an amazing exhibition, so congratulations.

**Mr Trumble:** Thank you very much.

**Ms BRODTMANN:** What I loved about it most was that sense of people seeing themselves there. These were a colourful assortment of individuals in sort of Dickensian England, but they were people doing it tough. They were people with tough lives. The stories really resonated with me. They were so powerful. They stayed with me till now. I think that there is a lot of work being done in the multicultural sphere. Again, in the photographic exhibition you've got now, you've covered that very well. In terms of subcontinental Australians, I don't think there's enough representation, apart from Shivas. That's a very large population now. There's not enough representation of them in what we see, or in terms of the Chinese population, as you mentioned. I think that we do need to be doing more on that, but we also need to be doing more in terms of representing Australians, which is why the Rugby League exhibition is so important—representing Australians from, really, all walks of life. I'm thinking here about trading hours and tradies. They're starting work at 6 am and they're finishing at four, so there's an option there. But opening at five—I don't know. But, if we are genuine about access and going right back to that principle of nearly 200 years ago about the East Londoners of the world, I think we do need to think about the representation of those sorts of people—the Dempsey's-type people—in our national collections, in our national institutions. But it was a very, very special exhibition, so bravo.

**Mr Vaughan:** One of the things that can work very well, and I've done it in another role, in another art museum, is to find funding to bring people in from special groups. When we looked at who came from where, with a pin of a certain colour on every school that came regularly, there were great areas where no-one ever came from, and these were suburbs—I'm not talking about Canberra now—with very high migrant populations, where the parents were working too hard and the schools couldn't afford to hire the bus. Making that really easy and bringing communities in was a very, very powerful thing to do. There must be some version of that that could apply in Canberra.

**CHAIR:** There is the PACER program—just your quick reflections.

**Dr Trinca:** I was just about to mention in that context that clearly, with the PACER program kind of freeing up the way that we support schools in coming to the major cultural institutions, that is warranted. I've always found it, quite frankly, unaccountable that the National Museum, which details the breadth of the Australian story and which invites people to develop a relationship to the idea of the national polity through understanding their
own experience as part of the national story, is not a mandatory visit on the PACER program. I think we need enhanced support for school groups to visit all of our institutions and encouragement to visit each of the offerings that we present to the public, which quite frankly draw their strength from our distinction. The important thing we hope that we might have conveyed today is how important it is for each of our missions to be understood as having some commonality but also being distinctly different. There's great strength in that diversity of the cultural offerings in Canberra and I think we should be encouraging school students, but also the broader public, and inviting them to that conversation with us about what it means to live in the country.

**CHAIR:** The other matter is just generic. Different parts of your collections relate to similar themes. There is the Film and Sound Archive, for example. Would there be any benefit in having a generic exhibition space within the National Capital area? I use this example: I think next year is the year celebrating Indigenous languages. For example, there could be, in a generic exhibition space, a variety of a whole range of institutions' collections. There wasn't much appetite for that this morning when I spoke to the Library or the Film and Sound Archive. What are your thoughts?

**Dr Trinca:** We lend to each other based on our exhibition programs already, and actively. All the public collecting institutions across Australia have a reciprocal relationship with respect to the loan of artwork. As Gerard mentioned to begin with, we loan well over 1,500 works every year to other national collecting institutions for their exhibition programs. I think that works well in terms of sharing our collections and making sure that tangential stories can be told through all of the collections available to us.

**Mr Vaughan:** We had a recent exhibition on Streeton, 'The art of war'. He was an official war artist. That was effectively a de facto collaboration between the War Memorial and the NGA. We borrowed very, very extensively from their collections and it was a very good model, in fact. The museum has significant Indigenous collections and we have significant Indigenous collections, and we certainly swap and move things around.

**Dr Trinca:** I think there is greater opportunity, quite frankly, to do things of the sort that you're describing, across the collections of the institutions. With respect to enlarging the exhibition space of the National Museum in the way that I've described, I and my colleague, whom you met this morning, Jan Muller, have been discussing how we might work very actively to bring the collections of the National Film and Sound Archive and our own together in a common facility on the Acton Peninsula, which we think would meet their interests around a new facility. I think it exploits the capacity of both collections to speak to each other. Imagine a painting crane from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which we hold in our collection, set against a very large-scale projection of wonderful 1930s Commonwealth film unit footage of the creation of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

**Mr Vaughan:** Possibly three paintings we own.

**Dr Trinca:** Indeed. You immediately get a sense of the possibilities of bringing these collections together in ways we haven't seen yet. And, if we're talking about genuinely different work of the kind that we can do across our institutions for this century, with a line set down by the past for our institutional mandates and interests, I think we have to be prepared to range across those and consider how we can bring our collections into greater conversation in the future. So I do think there's an opportunity for us to work more actively together to bring those collections together, beyond the very excellent work that we already do in terms of lending collections to each other.

**Mr Trumble:** In terms of a shared generic space—and not wishing to sound a gloomy note—we found that actually to foster and bring to fruition an absolutely equal collaboration between two institutions involved quite a deal of cultural adaptation between both. If we were talking about a shared space that all seven or eight or nine of us were involved with, I foresee some difficulties in how to maintain it, how to fund it, who will staff it, where it will be cared for—perhaps I've been in this job too long, but they are just pinging into my mind one after the other. So it is hard enough for us to care for our own facilities now, let alone to contemplate sharing one between all.

**Mr Vaughan:** Angus has had the courage to say it!

**CHAIR:** It was just a thought—

**Ms BRODTMANN:** That was the subtext whenever we've raised it.

**CHAIR:** The message has been loud and clear, but my imagination is now running wild.

**Dr Trinca:** Can we say something in respect of our collection storage issues?

**CHAIR:** Yes, please do.

**Dr Trinca:** Quite frankly, all of us have got very pressing issues around the storage of collections, but I do think it is genuinely one area where, by coming together, preserving the interests that we each have in the
particular material types that we have, we might be able to solve the Commonwealth's very real and considerable problem around national collections being adequately stored, not just in my own institution but in Gerard's and Angus's and beyond.

Mr Vaughan: And save a lot of money along the way. There are many examples of that in other places.

Ms BRODTMANN: Can you come up with some ideas on that?

Mr Vaughan: Yes, we can.

Ms BRODTMANN: Some submissions have touched on storage, but others haven't. So, if you've got a collective idea, then let us know.

Mr Vaughan: We'll move fast.

Dr Trinca: I don't think we have any shortage of ideas on how we could work together to solve our storage needs. It will simply require the Commonwealth to invest in it.

Ms BRODTMANN: We heard from the Archives today that 40 per cent of their budget is spent on storage.

Dr Trinca: Indeed.

CHAIR: Thank you for your attendance here today. If you've been asked to provide any additional information, please forward it to the secretary by Friday, 6 July 2018. You'll be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and will have the opportunity to request corrections to transcription errors.
RITCHIE, Mr Craig, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

[14:40]

CHAIR: I now welcome the representative of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to give evidence today. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that this hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and therefore has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The evidence given today will be recorded by Hansard and attracts parliamentary privilege. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to discussion.

Mr Ritchie: Thank you. I'm very pleased to be here to contribute to this important inquiry. I begin by acknowledging that the land on which the parliament sits and on which we meet is Ngunawal land and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. As a Dunguhtti Birripai man from the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, I thank them for allowing me to live on their country. I lead a national cultural institution that is now 54 years old. Only the National Archives and the National Library are older than the institute. It was founded in 1964 by the then Menzies government as an institute, modelled on a quasi-academic, quasi-learned academy, with a remit to research, document and collect material related to Aboriginal culture at the time, framed around the notion that, through a process of assimilation, Aboriginal people would disappear from the pages of history, which we patently haven't done.

Over the 54 years, our remit and mission as an organisation has changed, most notably in 1989 to include Torres Strait Islanders within the scope of the work that we do. For over 50 years, then, we've nurtured and safeguarded what is now the world's single most significant and best contextualized collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and heritage—and what we describe rather forlornly as one of our nation's best-kept national secrets. But we use our unique collection to promote better knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia and, as a national institution, to speak to our sense of national identity from the perspective of First Australians. Our collection includes a range of media from motion picture, art and objects, audio material—most of which relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, many of which are no longer spoken—video, books, publications, manuscripts. It's a diverse and very interesting collection.

As an institution begun basically from the perspective of research, we have at times in our history been relatively insular, and we're in the process now of transitioning and transforming our institution into an outward-facing, publicly engaged national institution that speaks not just with and to Indigenous Australia but to the nation at large, and, more recently, internationally as well.

CHAIR: I have visited the Museum of Australia, near your facility. I haven't been to your centre. What are the public-facing aspects that I would experience if I were to visit?

Mr Ritchie: As it stands at the moment, our facility on the peninsula is designed to house researchers, so our public exhibition and engagement space is fairly limited. We use about 40 square metres. That's basically the foyer of our facility. We do, however, have a public library, which is open to the public, in which we stage events when we have the opportunity to. One of the greatest challenges for us in transitioning to being more publicly engaged is that our facilities were designed for another purpose. We continue to engage with the Commonwealth, particularly around our capital needs, which are twofold. There's that aspect of it and, as you just heard, like all national institutions, the issue of storage is critical for us. Our vaults are at capacity and they're ageing.

CHAIR: What's the size of your collection?

Mr Ritchie: It's in excess of a million items across that range of media.

CHAIR: What is a description of the types of items that you hold?

Mr Ritchie: I can detail it to you or I can provide it to you on notice. It's films, art, artefacts, publications, rare books and lots of curriculum material that's been developed for schools, particularly around languages. The largest part of our collection is just short of 800,000 photographic images, and they range from glass plate images through to digital material.

Ms BRODTMANN: Thanks very much for the presentation and for your submission as well. I think it's really heartening to hear that you are actually reassessing and repositioning yourself, because my perception of your organisation has always been of a research institution. So well done on that. This is a question I've asked of all of the national institutions: what are the challenges you're facing over the next 12 months or two years? Can you just outline what they are.
Mr Ritchie: I'll start with perhaps the easier ones. That's the work that we need to do internally in terms of our organisational culture to reorient that to the public. Practically there are two broad areas. One is the issue of our facilities. Storage, in particular, is critical because, as I say, our vaults holding that large collection are at capacity. We're sort of stuck between a rock and a hard place in many respects because our legislation requires that the first function of the institute is to build and make accessible a national collection. It's difficult to build a national collection when your capacity to look after objects that could come to you is fairly limited. So our focus is on that. Also, sustainability in terms of making the most we can from our appropriation. One area in particular is troublesome to us and, I'm sure, to other institutions, and that is that all of our staff are employed under the Public Service Act and therefore fall within the ASL cap requirements. So of necessity we employ a lot of contractors. Our contractors costs us 25 per cent more than employing people as either non-ongoing or ongoing public servants. That's a real challenge to us because it actually impacts on our ability to build a sustainable workforce over the long term.

CHAIR: Do you receive private funding?

Mr Ritchie: We can receive private funding, but the amount of money that we get from private sources is fairly minimal.

Ms BRODTMANN: What are your governance arrangements?

Mr Ritchie: We have a council established under the act. The council is constituted of nine people, and a majority are Indigenous. Five of the nine are appointed by the relevant minister, and four of the nine are elected by members of the institute, for four-year terms each.

Ms BRODTMANN: How is that working?

Mr Ritchie: It works pretty well. It achieves a good balance, I think, of being able to bring the right kind of expertise onto council and also representing the interests of the members. We're not an advocacy body or a representative organisation in that sense, but it does allow our membership to shape and influence the way that the organisation evolves and develops.

Ms BRODTMANN: In terms of the reorientation of the culture, have you got a time line on that? That is a big—

Mr Ritchie: It's a bit like 'How long is a piece of string?'

Ms BRODTMANN: I know, you've got this challenge.

Mr Ritchie: I was terrified by a McKinsey metric that said that for every seven years of an organisation's life it takes a year to affect change. Well, that's a long while for an institution that's 54 years old. We're hoping to prove McKinsey wrong. We're working across a four-year corporate plan. It really is just continual effort and continual work to help people reorient their practice. We don't want the archivists or the technicians to be anything other than very good at what they do; it's much more about creating the right kind of context that gives a meaning and a reason to doing the things we're doing.

Ms BRODTMANN: How has the efficiency dividend affected you?

Mr Ritchie: I did neglect to mention the efficiency dividend. For us, it has a particularly difficult effect. In this financial year, it costs us $300,000 dollars, and it will rise to $600,000 in 2019-20. When you've got an appropriation of $20 million, that eats away fairly significantly. Our average staffing costs are $100,000. If you convert that into staff numbers from having to absorb that every year—as for every institution and every part of government, it has an impact on your ability to deliver outcomes.

Ms BRODTMANN: Could you say that again? $300,000 and it goes up to $600,000 next financial year?

Mr Ritchie: No, in 2018-19 it'll be $500,000 and in 2019-20 it will be $600,000. I can get you some more detail on that.

Ms BRODTMANN: Out of a $20 million budget?

Mr Ritchie: $20 million appropriation.

CHAIR: What was the catalyst for the change in the focus? Was it something that has been erected by government?

Mr Ritchie: It was government, to be honest.

CHAIR: Which goes to my point about changing your focus with the resources needed to do that.
Mr Ritchie: In 2012, the review of Indigenous higher education, conducted by Professor Larissa Behrendt, highlighted a particular role that the institute had played over the long term, particularly in training Indigenous people in research and research-related fields. That led to an external review of the institute under the auspices of then Minister Pyne, who was education minister, as well as an assessment independent of the state of the collection. That latter review revealed that our collection was at catastrophic risk for lots of reasons relating to the size of the appropriation resources available and the facilities. The upshot of that was some amendments to our act that effectively modernised the act—I think they were good changes—and an increase to our appropriation in the 2016-17 budget of $10 million a year. We were basically at $9 million to $10 million, and from 2016-17 on we got an additional $10 million each year, which took us $20 million.

CHAIR: Wouldn't this change in focus put at risk some of your collection activities if you have to do that within your existing budget?

Mr Ritchie: We will always make the choice to focus on collection, preservation and those kinds of things first, because the collection is indeed a national treasure, and then, as we're able to, use technological innovation to be able to deliver content—perhaps online rather than through exhibitions, although there is something about coming into a facility and experiencing and encountering our cultures. We'll always prioritise the care and preservation of the collection while we try to give effect to this outward-looking mandate.

Ms BRODTMANN: Do we have a visit to your centre as part of our—

CHAIR: I've suggested that we should.

Mr Ritchie: I put it on the record that you're invited!

Ms BRODTMANN: It would be good to get down there to see it, particularly that space, if this is part of your new strategic direction. How much space have you got?

Mr Ritchie: Currently about 40 square metres for public display. I have one member of my council, Rachel Perkins, who keeps banging on, 'We only have 40 square metres, Craig!'

CHAIR: I suppose that leads me to—I mean this in good faith: Australia's story is told in Canberra. We fund students to come here. People come here to experience the story of our democracy and visit the War Memorial. The Indigenous history of our country within the parliamentary triangle is represented by the tent embassy. I think it is sad and disappointing that we don't also have a great opportunity to learn about Indigenous art, culture and language as part of this national capital area where you do learn about the history of our nation. The 40 square metres is not sufficient to do that.

Mr Ritchie: I'd agree with you. I think the opportunity, notwithstanding your issue in relation to the Parliamentary Triangle, the potential or the plan to develop the Acton Peninsula, where we currently are, given the traffic that comes through there in terms of school groups and so forth, is immense. We have been working on a capital proposal to put to government that would allow us to extend our facility and create some innovative spaces for people to engage in all sorts of ways, not just traditional museum gallery activities, but utilising digital technology to be able to generally and really powerfully engage with the culture and history of Australia's Indigenous people. We're very committed to the principle that the first story of Australia is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander story and is 65,000 years old. We would share your concern that Australians in the main are missing the opportunity to engage with that in a very powerful way and in the absence of that are left with mythology that might be played out in the public space.

CHAIR: The only visualisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues is one of protest, with an anti-Adani sign painted on the side of the shed. While that is important, for me the richness of our Indigenous heritage—culture, arts and language—is something that needs to be brought to the fore. The Museum of Australia has an important Indigenous component in the art gallery. That's good, but should it be in the one institution? Should it be an institution that you go to, or is it better being across those different institutions?

Mr Ritchie: A significant proportion of the museum's Indigenous collection came from us at the time the museum was established. It was in our collection and it was transferred to the museum. We're very clear that we're not trying to compete with the museums or the galleries. They have their job to do. We have a really unique mix of functions. We have archives, we do gallery functions, museum functions, research and education functions. There is something to be said, though, for the role that we play as an institution that's led by a majority Indigenous council and where the two most senior administrative positions will always be held by an Indigenous person. So there's something about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people curating our own stories to the nation that can't be replicated by other institutions, with all the goodwill in the world. As for location, there is something powerfully significant about the idea of a significant Indigenous institution in the Parliamentary Triangle. That would take some serious investment by government, of course. Certainly from our perspective,
whilst we like the peninsula, we're up for that as well. There has been some significant work done in the past to scope out what a national keeping place or resting place for repatriated Indigenous remains might be. The report that the consultants produced in relation to that identified some sort of keeping place in the Parliamentary Triangle. Again I think, for the same reason that you're suggesting, that an institution like ours might be located there.

CHAIR: Thank you for your evidence today, Mr Ritchie. I apologise for the time. I see today's discussion with you as an introduction to your institution. We will take up your invitation to visit your institution and talk to you further about how you can continue to achieve your institution's objectives. You'll be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence and will have an opportunity to request corrections and transcription errors.

Committee adjourned at 14:59