8 May 2018

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Please find attached the Australian Academy of the Humanities' response to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories Inquiry into Canberra's National Institutions.

The Academy agrees to have its submission made publicly available on the Inquiry's website.

The Academy would be very pleased to elaborate on any of the observations contained in this submission. Please direct your initial queries to the Academy's Executive Director, Dr Christina Parolin via email to christina.parolin@humanities.org.au or phone on (02) 6125 9860.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Joy Damousi FAHA FASSA
President

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AAH Policy

INQUIRY INTO CANBERRA'S NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
MAY 2018

The Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories Inquiry into Canberra's National Institutions.

The Inquiry's Terms of Reference address issues affecting the sustainability of Canberra's national institutions into the future – including how well these institutions are set up to embrace technological change and to continue to provide services of educational, cultural, social and economic value into the future.

Our submission focuses on the current contribution of and future prospects for Canberra-based national institutions (applicable across the broader arts and cultural sector) in Australia's research and innovation system, broader digital economy, and international engagement agenda.

As one of the nation's four Learned Academies, the AAH has a strong commitment to the development of data, information and research infrastructure that builds innovation and research capacity in Australia. For the humanities and arts, the cultural and collecting institutions, or Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector, are among the principal repositories of Australia's social and cultural 'data' – our history, heritage, identity and collective memory. Canberra's national institutions are unique national assets that reflect a shared cultural understanding of our past and our present.

Australia's GLAM institutions play a vital role in national life by managing our cultural resources, and providing access to content and experience in increasingly innovative ways – for education, research and social interest purposes. Other submissions to the Inquiry will address the effect of the efficiency dividend and resourcing questions with a direct bearing on the Terms of Reference. On specific impacts and funding challenges, we would defer to the respective organisations themselves. What we can say is that we are aware, through feedback from researchers and our involvement on GLAM Peak, of some of the broader impacts of the efficiency dividend upon Canberra's major national cultural institutions, which have eroded the capacity of these institutions to discharge their obligations to the public, the state, the academic community and international partners.

One of the most valuable yet under-recognised contributions of the GLAM sector is to research, higher education and innovation. Australia has not yet fully appreciated and capitalised on the potential for strategic R&D investment and collaboration across our GLAM and research sectors. Our submission focuses on four policy areas where we believe there is potential to better leverage the value of GLAM and create cross-sectoral connections.

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1. Research, infrastructure and innovation (addressing Terms of Reference 1, 2, 5)

Digital transformations and big data developments have opened up unprecedented opportunities for a national collaborative data infrastructure strategy which unlocks Australia's cultural and social collections to allow researchers to link metadata and data from disparate sources, and conduct new forms of analysis.

Research cooperation and collaboration

There is a strong cooperative history and potential for greater collaboration between the GLAM and research sectors in Australia. One indicator of the extent and potential is GLAM partnerships on Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage and Discovery programs – including capacity building schemes such as Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) and the flagship ARC Centres of Excellence (CoE).

Using the ARC's publicly available data we conducted a preliminary search across all projects over the 2001-18 period involving a GLAM organisation. For ARC-funded projects with a museum as a participating institution, there were 248 projects in total over the period with total project funding of $122,972,610. For Canberra-based museums, results would indicate 30 projects with total project funding of $11,119,271 over the period. Indicative results for projects involving the National Library of Australia (NLA) for example, show 40 projects over the period, with total project funding of $10,508,618. The NLA has collaborated on projects involving 16 Australian universities in each state and territory.

The ARC has itself conducted detailed [analysis on the networking of GLAM organisations](#) through its funded projects over the 2008-14 period, which shows most GLAM organisations were involved through Linkage projects (71 per cent of total funded projects). The Linkage scheme facilitates collaboration between researchers and other parts of the innovation system including government, business, industry and end-users. Through the scheme 'research and development is undertaken to apply advanced knowledge to problems, acquire new knowledge and as a basis for securing commercial and other benefits of research.'

From 2008-14, the financial contribution by the GLAM sector each year in Linkage projects was approximately $1-2 million in cash, with an in-kind contribution ranging from $3 million in 2008 to a high point of over $6 million in 2011.The full spectrum of disciplines is involved – across both the HASS and STEM sectors – with Biological Sciences and History and Archaeology the top two fields (based on numbers of projects).

Several messages from that work are worth drawing out: that the involvement of GLAM organisations on bids increases the success rate; that the GLAM sector contributes financially and through its technical and curatorial expertise to pure and applied research development in Australia; and that there is under-realised potential for partnering with GLAM in strategic and capacity-building programs. In particular, we would single out the Centres of Excellence scheme. CoEs builds collaborative capacity across institutions, disciplines and research cohorts, and are training grounds for the future of research.

In the humanities, there are three current CoEs where GLAM organisations play important roles. In the [Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions](#) – through arts industry partnerships and school and community outreach; in the [Centre of the Excellence for the Dynamics of Language](#) – through its partnership with AIATSIS; and the [Australian Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity and Heritage,](#) which was awarded a $33.75 million grant in 2017 (with $1 million

from the NSW Government, and $11 million from participating universities, museums and other organisations).

Research and data infrastructure

A major gap and potential for growth is in data and research infrastructure. Canberra's national institutions (and broader GLAM institutions and networks) are central to achieving enhanced access to cultural and social data to support Australian researchers, industries and communities. They have an integral role to play in realising the ambitions of the 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap – which identified the need for national-scale infrastructure for HASS research to 'drive transformations in the way researchers discover, access, curate and analyse social and cultural data'.

The National Research Infrastructure Roadmap identified Platforms for HASS as one of its nine areas of priority focus. The Roadmap was explicit about the role of GLAM institutions here: as 'collective national research infrastructure', calling for 'a greater degree of interoperability across all collecting institutions' and said it would be 'imperative to improve the accessibility to physical items and build on digitisation efforts' to support and shape the future of HASS research.

An initiative which comprises the HASS and GLAM sectors and platforms for Indigenous research has the power to connect data from disparate sources held in individual projects, collections and institutions which is key to unlocking new knowledge about Australia's heritage, cultures and communities.

For example, the lack of comprehensive cultural mapping for Indigenous Australia means that we have yet to fully tap in to and learn from 50,000 years of land management and change. Current science-funded infrastructure goes only a fraction of the way towards bringing the complete picture in to view. This new national research infrastructure would contribute to bringing biological and ecological data together with language and cultural resources.

The AAH has been working with the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) and GLAM sector colleagues to develop a framework for Platforms for HASS. There is real opportunity for national research infrastructure facilities to learn from the digital innovations in the GLAM sector – and vice versa. We look forward to the Government's response to the Roadmap, to continuing to work with Department of Education, and to the development of a National Research Data Cloud and its role in facilitating and integrating HASS research networks in platform development.

2. Digital access and inclusion (addressing Terms of Reference 2 and 3)

The GLAM sector is a leader in Australia's digital access, literacy and inclusion agendas and governments should both recognise and facilitate this work. Canberra's national institutions are an integral node in an enabling cultural infrastructure that delivers core functions and services of benefit to all states and territories.

The Academy's submission to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's consultation on the Digital Economy (November 2017) pointed to the arts and cultural sector's long history of building digital inclusion, beginning with the pioneering work of the State Library of Victoria in the early 1990s, establishing VicNet to provide easy, low cost access to the then nascent public internet.

GLAM Peak's Digital Access to Collections project is focused on improving digital access to collections for the benefit of all Australians – with a particular emphasis on regional and remote Australia. The GLAM Peak publication *The Value and Impact of Digital Access to Collections*, includes a series of case studies that show that 'access to our shared heritage and knowledge makes a difference: digital collections support innovation, creativity, education, engagement, research at all scales, and combined with curiosity and with computational power, lead to significant social, cultural and economic outcomes'. A series of Digital Access to Collections case studies are available on the GLAM Peak website.

In Australia the work of the National Library of Australia's Trove platform has been transformational in beginning to open up Australia's rich cultural record to the nation. In the EU, investment in the Europeana cultural heritage infrastructure platform has stimulated capacity-building, according to the Council of the European Union, 'by creating a network of experts and cultural heritage institutions', and facilitated the 'availability of high-quality data ready for re-use which improves availability of cultural heritage on open platforms and social media and promotes its reuse in other sectors'.

These examples (and myriad others not listed here) demonstrate that Australia's cultural and collecting institutions have a strong appetite for innovation and strive to find new ways to connect their collections to the communities they serve. What the international experience demonstrates, however, is that for organisations to experiment and innovate with new technologies requires strategic resourcing, 'bold action' and surety of funding (*Digital Culture 2015: How Arts and Cultural Organisations use Technology*).

3. Skills (addressing Terms of Reference 2 and 3)

The future of work is high on the agenda of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. The cultural sector has a key role to play in a workforce agenda that delivers skills and knowledge for innovation.

A further area of opportunity/overlap/leverage is in developing a skilled arts and cultural workforce. The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) has conducted studies for the Chief Scientist and Commonwealth Science Council on the technical and creative skills mixes needed for jobs of the future. While some technological developments are leading to increased demand for STEM skills, there are also new demands for the range of skills associated with the HASS disciplines ('source' fields for the GLAM workforce). The digital literacy agenda itself requires a strategy that harnesses the knowledge and skills of both HASS and STEM.

In the UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council funds Doctoral Training Centres and a Doctoral Partnership scheme in areas of priority, such as design, modern languages and heritage. These schemes support collaborative applied research training with GLAM and other industry organisations, including BBC, Design, Fashion and Textiles councils, Intel Lab, Microsoft Research and Ford Motor Company.

4. Australia's role in the region and cultural diplomacy advantage (addressing Terms of Reference 3, 4, 5)

GLAM institutions occupy a unique role in society with high degrees of public trust and confidence in their collective institutional remit. They are important actors in our region and internationally. There is an opportunity to build more strategic effort and leverage existing

activities across the cultural sector for long-term and mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships.

Australia's cultural institutions contribute to a broader public diplomacy agenda. ACOLA's *Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Culture and Research* (2016) report found that the 'depth of Australia's linguistic and inter-cultural competence will be a determining factor in the future success of developments in innovation, science and technology, research capacity, international mobility, trade relations and economic competitiveness'. Australia's relationship with Asia, however, is overwhelmingly characterised by cultural distance. This has resulted in a soft power deficit in Asia, with cultural relations operating at a comparatively thin and instrumental level.

The AAH hosted a cultural sector briefing in Canberra in November 2016 which focused on concrete ways in which our cultural institutions can contribute to building effective cultural engagement to underwrite the quality of our relationships with our partners around the world. The meeting discussed key steps for improving our understanding of cultural engagement with Asia and other regions: assess the level of international engagement activity currently taking place within institutions; consider what kinds of activity can be done within existing budgets; and map the 'gaps', priorities and commercial opportunities.

There is an opportunity to increase strategic effort and leverage existing activities across the cultural sector and to 'close the distance' between Australia and the region through long-term and mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships. There is a significant opportunity to build on the innovative regional cultural networks and infrastructures, which have been established by independent cultural sector and civil society players, including Asian and Pacific diasporas.

Linking back to our earlier remarks on a HASS-GLAM national research infrastructure strategy, one major attraction for international landmark research infrastructures is Australia's data advantage with extensive collections of material on the Pacific and South East Asia. There is also a role for leadership with GLAM agencies in our region, sharing methods and training. Data collections held by GLAM and datasets created by researchers could then be made available in forms that can be accessed by people in the Pacific, PNG and Indonesia.

5. The Academy's role in the arts and cultural sector

The Academy would be very pleased to elaborate on any of the observations contained in this submission. We have an ongoing role and commitment in support of humanities, arts and culture in Australia, which currently involves:

> Participating in GLAM Peak – the peak body for GLAM organisations, historical societies and collecting institutions in Australia – which is working on a collaborative agenda to ensure all Australians can access, use and build on our national collections.

> Leading the effort for the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) sector in articulating research infrastructure needs into the future, and setting out a shared blueprint for digitally preserving and sharing Australia's vast social and cultural data collections.

> Partnering with three of Australia's leading philanthropic organisations – the Myer Foundation, the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, and the Keir Foundation – in establishing A New Approach, a landmark project to understand and promote the value,

[impact and relevance of investment in arts and culture](#). A New Approach will address Australia's need for a public, expert, independent voice to advance arts and creative activity in Australia. We believe this will deliver deep and lasting benefits to the cultural life of the nation.