

Community and Public Sector Union

Tune Review of the National Archives

June 2019

Recommendations

- 1) The Government repairs some of the damage done to the Archives with an immediate funding injection without restrictive caveats so that damage to core functions can be repaired.
- 2) The Government exempts the Archives from all future efficiency dividends.
- 3) The Government provides additional ongoing funding for digitisation work and storage, ensuring relevant work is done in-house.
- 4) The Government works with the CPSU to develop a funding model that recognises the unique characteristics of the Archives.
- 5) The Government ends the average staffing cap associated with its Smaller Government agenda, which is driving outsourcing and the use of labour hire.
- 6) Any future legislative changes regarding the Archives reinstates the principles of open government by placing the onus on the Archives to endeavour to include all records in the open period in a publicly accessible catalogue.

Introduction

As the primary union representing National Archives of Australia employees, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is committed to providing a strong voice for our members in key public policy and political debates.

The CPSU welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Tune Review of the National Archives. The National Archives plays an essential role in protecting and preserving Australia's collective history. As one member told us:

The NAA is the keeper of the original records for the Australian Government and with archival expertise, integrity and knowledge it ensures government accountability. The archival records in safekeeping by the NAA are the solid evidence about what government does.

The CPSU has had long held concerns about the funding and resourcing of our cultural and collecting institutions such as the National Archives, raising these through various inquiries and reviews such as the 2018 Inquiry into National Institutions. Years of budget cuts and understaffing combined with increasing expectations about digitisation has stretched the capacity of the National Archives to breaking point.

Our submission to this review has been informed by members and delegates at the National Archives of Australia and will address:

- The capability and resourcing of the National Archives;
- Barriers preventing the National Archives from fulfilling outcomes and functions.

The capability and resourcing of the National Archives;

What the National Archives urgently needs is more resources to deliver core functions. It is well-accepted that the National Archives have struggled under fiscal pressures, the National Archives previously stating on the public record that *"budget and staffing reductions are affecting our capacity to perform our fundamental role of securing, preserving, maintaining and making accessible the authentic and essential records of the decisions and actions of government, while providing high standards of service delivery that all Australians should expect from their National Archives."*¹

The CPSU surveyed staff at the National Archives and it is clear from their responses that the capability of the Archives has been run down due to a lack of funding. Overall, nine in ten staff said that corners were being cut and the quality of services were being compromised by under-resourcing. Many stated that it affected what the Archives can provide to the public and reduced accountability.

¹ National Archives of Australia (2019). Tune Review of the National Archives of Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/tune-review.aspx>

Resources have been reduced to the point where essential functions are now being impacted, such as teams having to reduce the level of support that they can provide to other sections.

Funding limitations have been the cause of several areas not having enough staff to complete required tasks. This has included years of not meeting access examination deadlines and staff cuts to teams responsible for the physical preservation of records.

A lot of the core corporate functions don't have the resources to put in the systems that let the Archives do its work. For instance, ICT is running on a shoestring, which makes it hard for the business areas that are trying to do digital to actually do digital.

Over the past several years doing 'more with less' has become doing 'less with less' to currently doing 'whatever you can with whatever you have'.

Members provided a range of specific examples of work either not being done or the quality being affected by budget cuts and inadequate resourcing. Common themes were reduced services, quality assurance being affected, service standards not being met:

The Archives cannot provide the appropriate ICT infrastructure to support employees performing their work appropriately and provide the necessary systems to support the public sector and providing access to the Community.

Over the last 7 years I have seen the quality assurance go from high percentage to almost no percentage at times. Outcomes of this are loss of reputation, increase in costs when mistakes are found and must be fixed after the fact, and lack of morale in staff knowing they are putting out a lower quality product.

I can only speak of ICT, but there are a lot of band-aid solutions being put in to meet requirements, but they are not robust. For instance, the videoconferencing was quickly put in, and still doesn't work properly. All because corners were cut.

Reduced lending services, reduced reference services, less applications for researchers with new legislation, more money spent on digital infrastructure and buildings than staff.

Minimal/wrong data in the system leads to problems with lending, digitisation, access. There aren't enough staff to fix all the problems that arise so, while there needs to be a certain tolerance for errors, we're getting to the point where the errors are becoming the norm and work practices changed to accommodate them.

Storage: lack of time and staff leads to poor planning for relocations and consolidations - boxes are being moved two, three, four times because multiple factors not considered initially.

It boils down to access to records. The cuts reduce our ability to open the reading room and at the same time leave us with less money to scan records for the internet. In short, they are making records unavailable.

Longer turnaround times to obtain images required for research, publications and personal use. I know that Uni students are unable to rely on obtaining access to information we hold for their study due to the long processing times.

We take longer to answer inquiries from the public. We take longer to add records to our catalogue, to examine them, and to digitise them. We take longer to make some records available to researchers, historians, and journalists who could use it to inform the public about past actions of the Australian government. We are less likely to do proactive digitisation projects to improve our online collection. We are less able to develop new initiatives or improve existing infrastructure like our website.

Limited access to records, records are not being well described. Records are not being digitised in a timely fashion in keeping with the organisation's priorities.

Survey respondents cited specific areas as having problems and needing more funding. These areas included government information management, preservation, description, the digital archive, digitisation, travelling exhibitions and access.

Government Information Management

Government Information Management is one of the key functions of the Archives, covering around two thirds of the organisation's legislated objectives and half its strategic objectives. Despite the importance of this function, the number of staff dedicated to information management has halved from 40 to 20 staff over the last three years, significantly affecting the capacity of the Archives.

The Archives is unable to provide the level of education and support to Commonwealth agencies needed to assist and guide them in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to record keeping and information management. Members have mentioned they suspect a huge amount of paper records are inaccessible to researchers that are still being kept by agencies and not being managed properly.

While the knowledge and skills exist, a lack of dedicated, knowledgeable senior managers and inadequate numbers of staff on the ground affect the Archive's ability to provide support. For example, a lack of experienced transfer officers and lack of skills in digital transfers were flagged as affecting the transfer of records.

The quality of work output has been affected as timeframes have not changed but now work is becoming "more prioritised". It has resulted in timeframes blowing out without acknowledging the flow-on effect to other work done by the Archives. The result has been the Archives' information policy expertise has withered to the extent that a separate National Data Commissioner is being established. Members report there will be significant overlap with the Archives' role.

Properly resourcing government information management is essential, members stated that better resourcing of government information management would have a flow-on effect to the rest of the Archives, making cataloguing and access much easier. For example, members flagged that the use of recordSearch, the Archive's catalogue, by agencies instead of products like TRIM would make it far easier to catalogue records in agencies. A whole of government recordkeeping solution would make it easier to translate all digital records into a format for recordSearch.

Preservation

The Archives has stated they are struggling to digitise records in response to demand and deteriorating may mean the loss of nearly 200,000 hours of audio-visual items as soon as 2025.² Funding for digitisation has tended to be one-off rather than ongoing and backlogs in processing requests are preventing records from being in the public domain.³

Budget cuts have meant preservation is stripped back and services that are needed to take care of the collection adequately are cut back. Staff are no longer physically stabilising collection items before they are accessed by researchers. Worryingly, a member at the National Archives reported that "*due to lack of staff, the Preventive program that monitors pest activity in the repositories have not been running as previous. This has resulted in at least one outbreak of insects that infested and damaged collection material.*" These claims that records are at risk were echoed by other members, one stating that "*Conservation advice is frequently ignored as the pressure to fulfil stats means that sections look for way to avoid Conservation altogether as middle management often do not see the long term care of the collection a priority, instead focussing on improving their own and their sections statistics*"

Members have also reported that the NAA is no longer a NATA accredited lab that provides services to other institutions, the public and manufacturers and its intern program to graduates in Cultural Heritage and Conservation has been abandoned. This internship program had been running for at

² Doug Dingwall (2019, April 22). National Archives review begins as agency races to save 'at risk' records. Canberra Times. Retrieved from <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6081160/national-archives-review-begins-as-agency-races-to-save-at-risk-records/>

³ National Archives of Australia (2019). Tune Review of the National Archives of Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/tune-review.aspx>

least 15 years, but the Archives no longer have the resources to provide this service to our future Conservation professionals.

Description

A common theme was that description is in dire need of additional resources. Records are not catalogued well and must be manually transcribed into the online database. Description has been cut back considerably, causing a backlog of individual descriptions to build up due to insufficient staff. The lack of meaningful descriptions in catalogues affects accessibility and digitisation, making it difficult for staff and those seeking material. Comments from members included:

There are several anomalies between the percentages of the collection described at an item level which severely impacts resourcing. Once items are described they are easier to find by both staff and the public and require less hands-on attention. When items are not described, more reference work is required, and reference staff are encouraged to push back leg work onto the requestor. In my experience this means nothing is found with the requestors giving up on their request. It also doesn't help that our website is very difficult to use and understand.

In the Sydney office, less than 9% of the collection has been described - archival description of records is now a low priority - part of the 'less is less' dictum. In all sections staffing numbers have been slashed - this does not result in moving forward.

Listings based on checklists that are not reconciled against physical holdings leads to items listed that are not in custody and items in custody not being listed.

We need a Review of current holdings. There are massive amounts of legacy records that were not properly described when accessioned. NAA only has accurate description of a small portion of what is really held in custody. No review functions mean we hold a massive amount of records that we know nothing about.

Members stated that both paper and digital records based descriptive work in the current business environment are directly affected by difficulties in accessing and coordinating technical ICT and Imaging support. There have been constraints on the current flexibility and availability of digital technology to achieve effective, high volume outcomes and meet public expectations and a lack of capacity to research and identify the viability of other transcription tools and digital solutions such as Digivol, Zooniverse or Scribe for use by NAA.

Several members cited outsourcing through the partnership with Ancestry as an example of the problems. More recent passenger lists needed to be indexed as people were referred to the Archives from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection for evidence of their arrival in Australia. The agreement with Ancestry to digitise passenger records resulted in poor quality indexing with several errors. The outsourced transcriptions to the index were done overseas. A member stated that Ancestry's transcribed passenger lists "did not seem to be quality controlled at all, I found ships where every passenger was recorded as arriving in the 21st century!"

Digital archive

There are growing expectations to capture, maintain and develop digital collections which are not being adequately funded. David Fricker, Director General of the National Archives has long been diverting the archive's resources into the costly goal of keeping pace with developments in digital technology.⁴

However, despite the importance of digitisation, it is one of the areas most affected by budget cuts. This is despite the demands of the digital archive requiring more resources. One member stated that "as we move to a more digital archive, we need resourcing to get us up to speed after years of neglect and inaction."

⁴ Sally Pryor (2018, 31 March). Deja vu: inquiry into funding cuts for Canberra's cultural institutions has a familiar ring. Canberra Times. Retrieved from <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/deja-vu-inquiry-into-funding-cuts-for-canberras-cultural-institutions-has-a-familiar-ring-20180329-h0y5b5.html>

Digitisation

CPSU members report that *“proactive digitisation by NAA has ceased, and digitisation – access to online imaged records - is now on a user pays basis, with the ‘first’ user paying, after which free access is provided to all online. Members also raised concerns that work digitising “the photographic collection is again being pushed aside, in the waiting lane, and vinegar syndrome is not being fully addressed”.*

Many spoke about digitisation being outsourced because of insufficient staff and the impact that had on the quality of work done. Comments included that it had resulted in sub-standard, poor copies and more work for Archives staff as guidelines prior to the commencement of work and quality checking is required.

The example of citizenship application records being vulnerable to risk through loss of evidential information from the paper format was mentioned. Members stated that the digitisation of the applications would be the most effective way to ensure accessibility, however, although the series has been recommended for digitisation, there is no indication that resources will be available in the near future. In addition, the physical format of the applications, containing staples and added pieces of data, is likely to preclude high volume imaging and take considerable time.

The need for outsourcing was questioned as the Archives could invest in its ongoing staff to do this work, avoiding the loss of corporate knowledge. As one member stated *“The Archives spends resources - time and money - in training new staff members then they leave due to lack of job security. Then the process starts again.*

Members stated that digitisation work should stay in-house because of quality control problems as *“some records require careful handling and should not be transported any more than necessary. Scanning errors have not been detected for some time as there is only limited quality assurance activity on outsourced digitisation.*

Travelling exhibitions

Travelling exhibitions are very important in providing Australians with access to the Archives in regional Australia. Staff reductions across the Archives mean less staff to develop and support exhibitions. To continue to deliver exhibitions, roles are being outsourced and supported by other Archives staff on top of their existing workloads. Fewer exhibitions are developed in-house, more are 'bought in' from other institutions and travelling exhibitions have been cut back due to inadequate resourcing. The Archives only tours exhibitions of material to regional areas when external funds are granted for that purpose and uses facsimiles to boost content where originals cannot tour. The National Archives are unable to provide staff to assist travelling exhibition venues with the installation of original objects for all touring exhibitions. One member commented that *“we are not extending our public presence which is a sad thing. The Archives needs champions to prosper. Things like exhibitions of our collections stimulate interest in the community.”*

Access

Underpinning the Archives' mandate is the public's basic right to government information that is over twenty years old unless there is a reason for an exemption. This right has been curtailed because of a lack of support from the rest of government

Members mentioned access to the archival resources of the Commonwealth as being affected by budget pressures. The volume of digital records and the need to transfer, manage, store and access requires greater staffing levels and more funding.

Waiting times to access records have dramatically increased, and the Archives is not able to release all the Cabinet records due for release on 1 January each year. The Archives has reported that there

remain more than 24,500 current applications to be processed.⁵ Concerns have been raised publicly by academics who use the Archive.⁶

In response, the head of the NAA has stated on the record that *"we have tremendous backlogs from requests from the public to access records in the collection, records that require declassification have to be carefully examined, and we need to consult with other agencies around Australia and sometimes overseas... There's a legislative requirement in there to make sure that we've made a decision within 90 days. It's in my annual reports that we don't meet that deadline, and for sure that's a resourcing issue."*⁷

Funding has skewed towards the digitisation of military service files, which while may be considered important by some, is not matched by resourcing for other users of the archives, limiting the value and accessibility of the Archives.

The CPSU notes that the digitisation of WWII service files has been made an election commitment, however, no funding has been attached.⁸ There are concerns that the positions will be project-based, not permanent full time. Members estimate that as each record may be about half an hour of work to digitise, it may take half a million work hours to complete the project. Given that core functions are not being met and service files are accessible, it may be a redirection of scarce resources away from other records are not available because they are buried in agencies and not being scrutinised.

The current workload pressures are such that amendments to the Archives Act were made to allow a greater time to respond to an inquiry or to an access application and limit the number of records a person can seek access to within a 30-day period. A member explained that *"These changes are because of budgetary pressures. Where we once had a large pool of officers to meet the demand, we now have about half that number for 10 years ago."*

Professor Anne Twomey has stated that delays are caused by access examination, which is the process of ensuring nothing in a record should be exempted from access.⁹ Records not being cleared for public access has caused a bottleneck with the backlog getting bigger and bigger. Instead of providing additional funding, the solution was making legislative changes.

Members have suggested the changes to the Act help to manage the number of access requests by a small group of researchers but some researchers are contacting the Archives to publish or because they are involved in academia; there are secondary consumers of the archives when an article or book is published, and the reach of the work done by the employees of the archives in these cases goes further than can be measured by the concept that each finalised access application one successful transaction.

⁵ National Archives of Australia (2019). Access Examination. Retrieved from <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/access-examination-project.aspx>

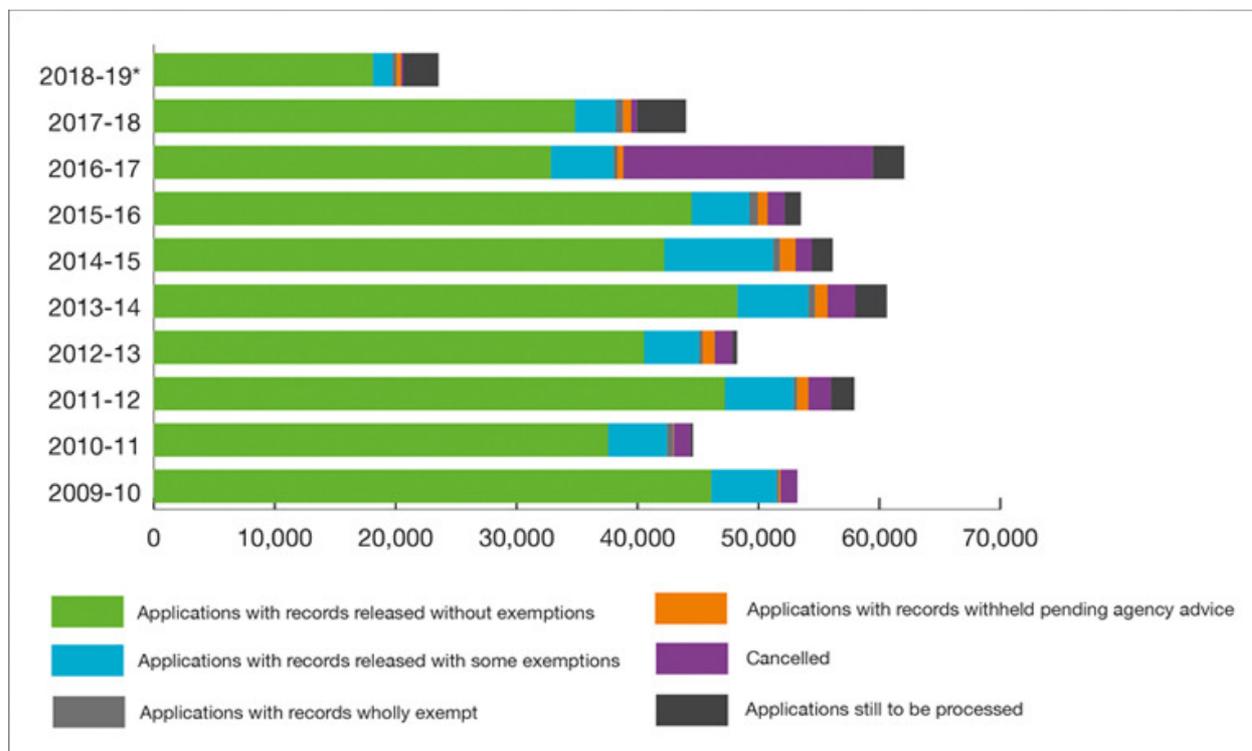
⁶ Stephen Easton. (2019, 18 April). Anne Twomey: National Archives 'completely dysfunctional' for serious scholarship. The Mandarin. Retrieved from <https://www.themandarin.com.au/107445-anne-twomey-national-archives-now-completely-dysfunctional-for-serious-scholars/>

⁷ Sally Pryor (2018, 31 March). Deja vu: inquiry into funding cuts for Canberra's cultural institutions has a familiar ring. Canberra Times. Retrieved from <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/deja-vu-inquiry-into-funding-cuts-for-canberras-cultural-institutions-has-a-familiar-ring-20180329-h0y5b5.html>

⁸ The Liberal Party of Australia (2019, 24 April). Honouring Australians' Service. Retrieved from <https://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2019/04/24/honouring-australians-service>

⁹ <https://www.themandarin.com.au/107445-anne-twomey-national-archives-now-completely-dysfunctional-for-serious-scholars/>

Chart 1: “Examination progress for applications submitted each financial year, as at 31 December 2018” from the National Archives of Australia.¹⁰



Budget pressures

The unique requirements of the Archives require a reassessment of its funding model. The demands on the Archives are only increasing in the digital age and this has not been met with commensurate increases in funding by the Commonwealth. An analysis of expenses from 2008-09 and 2017-18 Portfolio Budget Statements shows modest average increase in expenses below that of inflation. As one member explained:

Our abilities to produce have been continually compressed each financial year. Funding is continually moved within the Archives to address issues as they arise, we are then unable to deliver planned outcomes.

Table 1: Expenses from Portfolio Budget Statements¹¹

Agency	2008-09 (\$m)	2018-19 (\$m)	Change (\$m)	%	% p.a.
NAA	\$ 72.1	\$ 87.8	\$ 15.7	21.8%	2.0%

There have also been direct budget cuts. While exempt from the proposed extension of the efficiency dividend announced during the 2019 federal election campaign, the Archives is not exempt from the base level efficiency dividend and has only been exempt once from previous increases to the efficiency dividend (in 2011-12), providing only a brief pause to the continuation of reductions in staffing and funding. In the 2014-15 Budget, the Government announced it would achieve savings of \$2.4 million over four years from 2014-15 by consolidating the back-office functions of Canberra-based collection agencies including the National Archives of Australia.¹² This “shared services” attempt for national

¹⁰ National Archives of Australia (2019). Access Examination. Retrieved from <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/access-examination-project.aspx>

¹¹ Data from relevant agency 2009-10 and 2019-20 Portfolio Budget Statements

¹² Commonwealth of Australia (2014, May). Budget 2014-15 - Budget Paper No.2 - Part 2: Expense Measures. Retrieved from http://www.budget.gov.au/2014-15/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-05.htm

institutions caused long-term damage to agencies that lost staff. The National Archives, for example, lost six staff and the “shared services” portfolio hub was disbanded before completion.

Other examples of cuts provided by members included:

- Staffing dedicated to government information management halving in the last three years
- Reduction in staffing levels in the collection operation branch, potentially affecting the preservation of the analogue collection
- The conservation laboratory in Canberra losing four out of nine staff

These anecdotal reports of staffing cuts are confirmed by reported staffing levels. An analysis of actual average staffing level figures from the Budget papers over the decade show a decline since 2008-09.

Table 2: Average Staffing Levels at national institutions (2008-09 to 2018-19)

Agency	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Change	%
NAA	446	446	418	429	429	416	405	395	390	375	355	-91	20.4%

It is worth noting that Table 2 does not include labour hire and other contractors who may be employed to get around the Average Staffing Level cap that the Archives is not exempt from.

In the 2015-16 Budget, the Coalition committed to capping the size of the Australian Public Service around or below 2006-07 levels (167,596).¹³ This has meant that regardless of funding levels or operational requirements, agencies are forced to have a maximum average staffing level.

The average staffing level cap is forcing agencies that have the funding to hire additional staff to engage casuals, hire contractors and use labour hire to do work that permanent APS employees should be doing. The arbitrary cap is creating a perverse incentive to spend critical funding on labour hire, and those employees are paid significantly less with far worse conditions than the equivalent APS employees.

One member highlighted the absurdity of these cuts to the NAA stated that “*staffing caps and efficiency dividends make no sense when there is no ability to adopt and extend new technology to make up for these. In the Archives domain, the ability of tech to produce efficiencies has clear limits as much of our work involves judgement and decision making in ambiguous contexts so ongoing reductions in personnel simply mean inevitable ineffectiveness.*”

Members reported these increased workloads are increasing the stress on remaining staff. It is affecting the workplace culture, leading to worse outcomes and a less effective workforce. Members believe that pressures from increased workloads and the stress it causes is a contributor to the Archive’s high unscheduled leave rate. Internal Workforce Metrics Reports show that it has increased from 13.3 in the last quarter of 2013 to 17.1 in the last quarter of 2018.

Smaller state offers such as Perth, Adelaide, Darwin, Brisbane and Hobart have been under pressure. With less than eight staff, sometimes as few as three, there is limited time capacity to provide professional services to the public. These increased workloads have affecting the health and well-being of staff, many mentioning increased stress and the risk of burnout.

Barriers preventing the National Archives from fulfilling outcomes and functions.

The lack of funding and inadequate staffing levels are the biggest barriers stopping the Archives from fulfilling its functions and delivering outcomes. This was reaffirmed in the CPSU’s survey of Archives staff with nearly all stating it.

Only one in five said too many functions (17.5%) and the current legislation (20.6%) were barriers. Archives staff emphasised that the general problem was not the legislation itself, but rather resourcing levels are inadequate in meeting expectations.

¹³ Australian Government (2016, May). 2016-17 Budget, Budget Paper No.4 Part 2: Staffing of Agencies. Retrieved from http://budget.gov.au/2016-17/content/bp4/html/09_staff.htm

The issue isn't the legislation. In fact, the time limits imposed within the legislation are more than generous given people's expectation in current times for access to material immediately. Unfortunately, it is this gap in the delivery timelines expectations of the public against what the legislation states we will do and what is possible to deliver under current circumstances, that causes the greatest pain.

Furthermore, nine in ten (91.4%) said they would be concerned over any plan to transfer or cease existing functions. Staff recommended that the work the range of functions done by the NAA has already been reduced and that the functions are interrelated.

All non-essential functions and services have already been discontinued or reduced.

The things we presently do are rather basic for an archival institution - to get rid of any existing function will be to abrogate our responsibilities to the government and the public.

The Archives' core businesses are intertwined. For instance, to make records available to the public, they must be created and selected for retention first. The people created the Records Authorities need to be in contact with the people responding to reference inquiries, at least to the level of being familiar with their needs, so that they can identify the records that should be retained, based on the needs of the Australian people. If you put them in different agencies, then that collaboration will be lost. There are plenty of other functions that are like that. It's an organic understanding of the needs of the whole process that would be lost if the functions were separated.

It was also noted that there were recent legislative changes to the Archives Act that came into effect on 25 April 2019. Changes included allowing extensions the timeframe within which the National Archives is required to respond and process applications and some other administrative changes.

Members reported that the Australian National Guide to Archival Material (ANGAM) which is effectively recordSearch, the Archive's catalogue, was previously covered under Section 66 of the Act, which has now been removed. It stated that the Archives should endeavour to include all Commonwealth records subject to the open period in the guide, whether they are in the Archives' custody or not. These obligations have been removed from the Act, likely because the Archives does not have enough employees to fulfil those obligations.

Instead of removing barriers, these legislative changes will cement backlogs in legislation by limiting how many requests can be made at once and giving the Director General the power to arbitrarily extend time limits by 90 days. As previously stated, these changes favours one-off piecemeal requests, those doing original research potentially facing a wait of several years. These changes were a response to the symptoms rather than addressing the causes of the backlog.

Staff do not agree that further legislative changes will enable the National Archives to better manage these high-volume applications or free up staff to service more low volume access applications and proactively examine more records for public release. What is needed is more funding because that is the root cause of many of the problems the Archives has.

Staff have also indicated they feel a disconnect with the Senior Executive Service (SES) and that they may not understand the operational reality of the Archives. According to the 2017 APS Census, less than a third (29%) feel employees in the NAA are valued for their contribution and only a quarter (27%) feel communication between the SES and other employees is effective. This may be partially explained by only two in five (40%) saying staff were consulted about change at work and less than half (45%) being satisfied with the stability and security of their current job, significantly lower than comparable agencies.

Recommendations

The funding model for the National Archives must change. Years of cuts have eroded the Archives' capacity to meet core outcomes and deliver its functions. The demands of digitisation have increased pressure the Archives and forced it to choose between core functions. The average staffing level cap

has driven the outsourcing of work to labour hire and contractors. The damage caused by Budget cuts and under resourcing has reached a point where the impact is publicly obvious with users experiencing worse services.

If the situation does not change, the quality of the collection will be at risk due to outsourcing and a lack of preventative care. Corporate knowledge will be run down and there will be huge delays for the public to access the collection. This is not an acceptable situation. All records in the open period should be in a publicly accessible catalogue and there should be an onus on the Archives to ensure this.

The Government must end the efficiency dividend and provide the National Archives with additional ongoing funding. Digitisation work should be brought back in-house and funded properly to guarantee quality. The Government should also end the average staffing level cap to let the National Archives to allocate resources more effectively to meet its needs.

Recommendation 1: The Government repairs some of the damage done to the Archives with an immediate funding injection without restrictive caveats so that damage to core functions can be repaired.

Recommendation 2: The Government exempts the Archives from all future efficiency dividends.

Recommendation 3: The Government provides additional ongoing funding for digitisation work and storage, ensuring relevant work is done in-house.

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