



The Hon Barry Cohen MP
Minister for Home Affairs and Environment
Room L143
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister
The ACT Branch of the LAA views with dismay the recent decision to separate the National Film and Sound Archive from the control of the National Library of Australia.

In recent months, much ill-informed and mischievous criticism of the National Library's performance in preserving the national heritage has been aired in the press. The Branch Council is concerned that this criticism is a plain distortion of the situation.

The recent decision to separate the National Film and Sound Archive from the principal collections of Australiana appears to have been made with indecent haste. Indeed, the Minister appears to have been unduly influenced by narrow sectional interests.

One wonders if the vision of Sir Harold White, Allan Fleming, Rod Wallace, Pauline Fanning, Clifford Burmester and the present Director-General, will survive the transfer from National Library to Home Affairs. It is easy to forget that Australia owes a huge debt to these people, who worked tirelessly to ensure that Australian film and sound archives were preserved for future generations, along with books and other non-print material.

For many years, the National Library of Australia has discharged its duties under the National Library Act with distinction. In recent years, in the face of criticism, staff ceilings and financial restraint, it has endeavoured to ensure that the national collection has been maintained and enhanced, for the good of all Australians.

The integrity of this government, in the face of this decision, may well be challenged by future generations. We urge the Minister to think again. It is not too late.

(Dr) Maxine Rochester
President, ACT Branch

Dr M. Rochester
President
The Library Association of Australia
ACT Branch
GPO Box 679
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Dr Rochester
Thank you for your letter of 26 April 1984 expressing the concern of the ACT Branch of the Library Association of Australia that the Government has decided to establish a National Film and Sound Archive independent of the National Library of Australia.

I enclose for your information a copy of my announcement outlining steps to be taken for the future development of the Archive. In particular, I draw your attention to paragraph 8 of the News Release in which I said that the criticism of the National Library's management of its holdings of film and sound recordings is unfair.

I can assure you that the Government gave full consideration to the future development of our film and sound heritage and took into account a diverse range of views, including those of the National Library itself. Far from a decision being made in haste the matter was considered over a number of months.

The contribution of those who sought to preserve film and sound materials from an early date, has not been forgotten, and your expressions of support for the National Library are appreciated.

Barry Cohen

Different drummers . . .

THE opening of the National Film and Sound Archive tonight is shaping up to be Canberra's premier social event. Hosted by Kate Fitzpatrick and Mike Carlton, and being opened by the Prime Minister, 800 people are expected, with a guest list that reads like *Who's Who*. There are, however, problems. Canberra has run dry of black tie. One gentleman has had to search as far afield as Newcastle for his penguin suit.

Column 8
Sydney Morning Herald
October 3.

Those people who have received an invitation to the official opening of the National Film & Sound Archive will have noted that it is now housed in the building which formerly housed the Australian Institute of Anatomy. This seems eminently appropriate since the building now houses one of the severed limbs of the National Library of Australia.

It should be noted also that dress will be black tie; more properly it might have been black armband to mourn the dismembering of a national institution.

People wishing to attend this wake must turn up at 8 o'clock on Wednesday, 3 October 1984.

Laurie Brown
State Library of Tasmania

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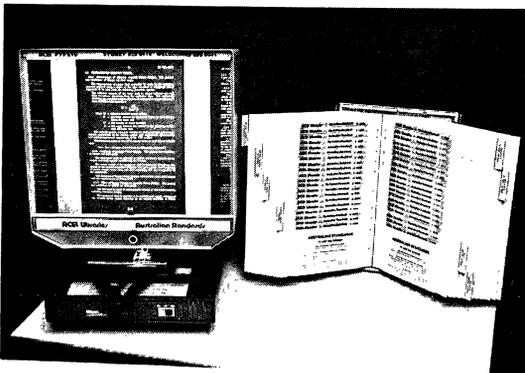
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