

The shared value of national institutions

- 2.1 Globally, institutions such as museums, libraries, galleries and memorials play an important role in conserving, interpreting and facilitating engagement with information and artefacts of cultural, scientific and historical importance.¹ They also contribute to the economy through direct employment and expenditure, as well as tourism.
- 2.2 The Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House was one of many participants in the inquiry who described the ‘unseen’ aspects of value brought by Canberra’s national institutions:
- ... the many tens of thousands of volunteer hours, the trickle down impacts of boosted tourism, the long-term impacts on enhanced citizenship from education programs, the cultural diplomacy that draws us together.²
- 2.3 This chapter considers how national institutions located in Canberra benefit Australian society. This includes their role in the preservation and promotion of Australia’s history, culture and national identity as well as contribution to the economy. The chapter will also consider how national institutions contribute to Australia’s relations with other nations.

Preserving and presenting our history and culture

- 2.4 As noted in chapter 1, several national institutions located in Canberra are home to significant collections of a range of material. This includes art,
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1 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [1].

2 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [1]. See also Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 8; Mr Neil Hermes, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

literature, historical and social material, objects relating to military history, archives, and film and sound recordings.

- 2.5 Many of the national institutions, including the National Collecting Institutions, are established under legislation which mandates them to develop, maintain and provide access to such collections.³
- 2.6 Many inquiry participants emphasised that the collections of the institutions have 'intrinsic value' and make a positive contribution to the preservation and promotion of Australia's cultural history and national identity.⁴ By preserving and providing access to material relating to Australia's political, social and cultural history, national institutions play an important role in capturing various aspects of Australia's history.
- 2.7 The Department of Communications and the Arts (DCA) described the national institutions as 'the keepers of the nation's cultural heritage. They're the keepers of our history, of our art and of our heritage assets'.⁵
- 2.8 One example was provided by the National Gallery of Australia (NGA), who told the Committee that it held by far the largest fine art collection in Australia, including 'the largest and best Indigenous [art] collection in the world', a major international collection and growing contemporary collection.⁶
- 2.9 The National Museum of Australia (NMA) submitted that its collection, along with those of the other national institutions, 'together comprise a remarkable and peerless window into the nation's culture and society'.⁷
- 2.10 Mr Jan Müller, Chief Executive Officer of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), described the institutions' collective value this way:

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

3 Meredith Hinchliffe, Ms Carolyn Forster OAM and Ms Sandy Forbes, *Submission 56*, p. 1. Issues relating to legislation governing national institutions are discussed further in chapter 4.

4 For example: GLAM Peak, *Submission 34*, p. 3; Council of Australasian Museum Directors, *Submission 43*, pp. [1-3]; and Dr Stephen Arnott, PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Arts Division, Department of Communications and the Arts, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 1.

5 Dr Stephen Arnott PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Arts Division, Department of Communications and the Arts, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 1.

6 Mr Gerard Vaughan AM, Director, National Gallery of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 22 June 2018, pp. 47-48.

7 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 3.

what we should do, and that's what we do in partnership as much as possible.⁸

- 2.11 Evidence given to the Committee further highlighted that national institutions play an integral role in Australian society not only by accumulating and maintaining these collections, but crucially, by providing public access to them. The DCA noted 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'.⁹
- 2.12 The broad range of national institutions located in Canberra allows citizens to engage with various aspects of Australian history. For example, MoAD tells the 'story of Australia's journey from federation to becoming one of the world's most vibrant and multicultural democratic nations'.¹⁰
- 2.13 The National Archives of Australia (NAA) holds all of the records of the Commonwealth accumulated since Federation.¹¹ By preserving and providing access to records of all government entities, including those that were previously classified, the Archives holds Australian governments accountable to the people they serve.¹²
- 2.14 Science & Technology Australia noted that as places of memory, the institutions also provide the public opportunities to access and explore the 'stories that have shaped our communities, our nation, and our world'.¹³
- 2.15 The national institutions as a collective play an important role in collecting, preserving and providing access to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and heritage. For example the NAA is home to the:
- ...documentation of the administration of Indigenous people on settlements and missions, their rations and entitlements, housing, employment, their movement, marriage, eligibility and permissions...¹⁴
- 2.16 In particular, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is home to 'the world's single most significant

8 Mr Jan Müller, Chief Executive Officer, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

9 Dr Stephen Arnott PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Arts Division, Department of Communications and the Arts, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 2.

10 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [2].

11 National Archives of Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 3.

12 National Archives of Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 3.

13 Science & Technology Australia, *Submission 38*, p. 2.

14 Ms Phyllis Williams, Regional Manager, North, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 15.

and best contextualised collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and heritage'.¹⁵ The Institute's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Craig Ritchie, stressed that AIATSIS provides a significant opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to curate their own stories to the nation, and that this cannot 'be replicated by other institutions'.¹⁶

Expressing and exploring our national identity

2.17 By preserving and providing access to documents and artefacts recording Australia's political, social and cultural history, many inquiry participants argued that national institutions help to cultivate a sense of personal and national identity.¹⁷ The ACT Minister for the Arts and Community Events, Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, observed that the national institutions are 'a representation of what it is to be Australian' and 'tell the stories of where we came from, who we are and who we hope to be'.¹⁸

2.18 Evidence to the Committee suggested that connecting people to the collections of these institutions has the potential to create a stronger society, with citizens that are engaged and have a sense of national identity.¹⁹ The Director-General of the NAA, Mr David Fricker, expressed the view that:

... 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.²⁰

2.19 The NMA submitted that:

15 Mr Craig Ritchie, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 56.

16 Mr Craig Ritchie, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 59.

17 Mr Brendon Kelson, *Submission 18*, p. [1]; Combined Community Councils of the Australian Capital Territory, *Submission 42*, p. 1; Council of Australasian Museum Directors, *Submission 43*, pp. [1-3]; The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 38.

18 Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 8.

19 For example: Mr David Fricker, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 16; and Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

20 Mr David Fricker, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 16.

The Museum's National Historical Collection, and indeed all national collections, are fundamental to our self-understanding as a people and a society. In a world where global forces are increasingly experienced and felt at a local level, it is a matter of national interest to provide clear and accessible opportunities for all people in this country to develop a mature sense of what it means to be Australian. Knowing who we are, and who we can be, depends on us having a solid appreciation of all that has gone before.²¹

- 2.20 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director of the Australian War Memorial (AWM), said that:

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...than we are by our values and our beliefs, and the way [we] 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 adversity and how we will face the inevitable adversities that are coming.²²

- 2.21 The Committee heard that the NAA's collection holds personal information relating to almost every Australian citizen and resident. This allows individuals to 'develop a deeper understanding of their own identity and their part in the history of this nation'.²³

- 2.22 Regional Manager of the NAA, Ms Phyllis Williams, reflected on the power of national institutions, the Archives in particular, to connect an individual to their own story, when she noted her own connection to the collection. She stated that:

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.²⁴

- 2.23 The Committee was told that the institutions play an important role in exposing audiences to material that not only resonates with them, but also

21 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 3.

22 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 38.

23 National Archives of Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 3.

24 Ms Phyllis Williams, Regional Manager, North, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 15.

challenges them.²⁵ In particular, inquiry participants stressed the importance of representing both positive and negative aspects of Australian history and culture.²⁶ Mr Fricker said that providing audiences with the opportunity to identify things they don't like in their history can provide audiences with 'a channel to correct [these] ... and to celebrate the things they do like'.²⁷

- 2.24 Some inquiry participants raised concerns that without widespread access to Canberra's national institutions, and more broadly institutions across Australia, there is a risk that citizens will become less engaged with Australia's history and cultural identity. The Director-General of the National Library of Australia (NLA), Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, observed that there may already be a 'sense of disengagement from our complex national history'.²⁸
- 2.25 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director of the National Museum of Australia, noted the importance of a sense of belonging in the current 'global flow of ideas and the discourses that are available now through the internet'.²⁹
- 2.26 Mr Fricker noted the importance of trusted national institutions in providing authentic and reliable information amid concern about 'inauthentic' sources that may be 'deliberately promoted by actors without the interests of Australia at heart'.³⁰
- 2.27 To counter these concerns, inquiry participants further emphasised the importance of ensuring that people have trusted institutions with which they can engage. Inquiry participants stressed that the institutions must reflect the stories of all Australians to ensure that everyone is able to identify and connect the collections to their personal story, their community story and their national story.³¹

25 For example: The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 38; and Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 52.

26 For example: Mr David Fricker, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, pp. 16-17; and Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 52.

27 Mr David Fricker, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

28 Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

29 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 49.

30 Mr David Fricker, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

31 Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17; and Dr Stephen Arnott, PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Arts

2.28 NFSA CEO Mr Jan Müller commented that:

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...³²

2.29 In this respect, a number of submitters and witnesses stressed the importance of comprehensive representation of Australians in the collections, exhibitions and programs of national institutions, particularly in relation to Australia's Indigenous and multicultural communities. Dr Ayres said that inclusivity in the collections of national institutions helps to 'strengthen [a] sense of cultural prosperity and effective citizenship'.³³ This issue is discussed further in chapter 3.

2.30 Mr Craig Ritchie of AIATSIS advised that its collection helps 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'.³⁴

Economic value

2.31 The Committee received evidence about the important contribution national institutions make to the Australian, and in particular the ACT's, economy. The economic benefits of national institutions derive largely from tourism, but the institutions also contribute to the ACT economy through direct employment and expenditure.³⁵

Division, Department of Communications and the Arts, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 1.

32 Mr Jan Müller, Chief Executive Officer, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

33 Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 17.

34 Mr Craig Ritchie, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 56.

35 Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 8.

Tourism

- 2.32 Many submitters and witnesses emphasised that the national institutions are a major drawcard for both international and domestic travellers.³⁶
- 2.33 The ACT Government submitted that national cultural institutions form an integral part of the Canberra visitor experience and have contributed to a recent increase in overnight visitors to the capital.³⁷ In 2017, Canberra had a record breaking 2.75 million domestic overnight visitors and 243 000 international visitors.³⁸ This was supported by Museums Galleries Australia who noted that Canberra's recent tourism boom 'was driven significantly by the attractions of the iconic national institutions'.³⁹
- 2.34 More broadly, the Canberra Business Chamber submitted that in Australia the visitor economy is growing at a much faster rate than the rest of the economy.⁴⁰ The Chamber stated that in 2016-17, tourism Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 4.9 per cent compared to 2 per cent real GDP economy wide, and that this has driven growth in jobs and export earnings. In addition, the Chamber pointed out the flow-on implications for government revenue:
- ... continued growth in visitor numbers will also boost revenue collection for the Government producing substantial increases in collections of ticket tax (passenger movement charge), boosting GST collection and building on the more than \$8 billion in tax already contributed by the sector.⁴¹
- 2.35 Some submitters further observed that the introduction of regular international flights to Canberra has created opportunities for the national institutions to attract new and larger tourist markets from places like Singapore and New Zealand.⁴²

Other economic benefits

- 2.36 The ACT Government stated that Canberra's national institutions also contribute to the ACT economy via direct employment.⁴³ In 2017-18 the

36 For example: ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 1; Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 2; Canberra Business Chamber, *Submission 58*, p. 5; and Mr Neil Hermes, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

37 ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 1.

38 ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 1.

39 Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 2.

40 Canberra Business Chamber, *Submission 58*, p. 5.

41 Canberra Business Chamber, *Submission 58*, p. 5.

42 For example: ACT Government, *Submission 69*, pp. 3-4; and Ms Kate Driver, Acting Director, Questacon, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra 22 June 2018, p. 36.

43 ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 9.

AWM provided an average of 283 jobs.⁴⁴ During the same period, the NGA employed an average of 217 staff, while the NLA employed 383 staff.⁴⁵ In particular, the national institutions provide employment to staff with specialised knowledge and skills to ensure the survival of collections.⁴⁶ This includes curators and researchers as well as people trained in conserving specific materials such as paper, photographs, metals and ethnographic objects.⁴⁷ Staffing issues are discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

- 2.37 Institutions also pointed out their contribution to Australia's 'knowledge economy' in a range of ways, including supporting this country's creative and scientific industries and exports. The NMA described the contribution of the national institutions' collections and programs as 'central to building an enterprising and successful knowledge economy in the 21st century'.⁴⁸

Enhancing Australia's international relations

- 2.38 As an integral part of the Canberra visitor experience, national institutions have the potential to further international audiences' understanding of and trust in Australia. The Combined Community Councils of the ACT observed that the national institutions are visited by international tourists and foreign dignitaries, and can contribute to their overall impressions of Australia.⁴⁹ Moreover, some of the institutions participate in international touring programs, and loan material from their collections to overseas institutions.⁵⁰
- 2.39 Evidence emphasised the role Canberra-based national institutions also play in reaching out and collaborating with Australia's Asia-Pacific neighbours. For example, the NLA supports the collection of print and

44 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 11.

45 Community and Public Sector Union, *Submission 12*, p. 11.

46 For example: Council of Australasian Museum Directors, *Submission 43*, p. [7]; Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material Inc., *Submission 46*, p. [2]; and Ms Cassandra O'Hare, Section Secretary for the national Cultural Institutions, Community and Public Sector Union, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 10.

47 Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material Inc, *Submission 46*, p. [2]; and Heritage, Museums and Conservation program in the Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra, *Submission 23*, p. [2].

48 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 3.

49 Combined Community Councils of the Australian Capital Territory, *Submission 42*, p. 1.

50 For example: National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 1; and Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 9.

electronic resources in Asia and the Pacific, by maintaining an office in Jakarta and through involvement with the Internet Archive and the *Archive-It* initiative.⁵¹

- 2.40 Evidence to the Committee also highlighted that some of the institutions based in Canberra have partnered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to deliver programs internationally. For example, in partnership with DFAT, the NMA tours a series of graphic panel displays to diplomatic missions abroad.⁵² Additionally, DFAT and the National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC) provided support in the development of an Electoral Education Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 2012, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme.⁵³
- 2.41 The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) stated that 'Questacon is a significant cultural diplomacy asset for Australia'.⁵⁴ The Department submitted that:
- Questacon was established as a Joint Australia-Japan Bicentennial project and from that time has enjoyed strong and cordial relationships with Japanese government agencies and science centres. Questacon enjoys excellent relationships with Canberra's diplomatic community and hosts many events with Embassies and High Commissions, as well as international delegations and VIP Visits.⁵⁵
- 2.42 Questacon has also delivered travelling exhibitions to Brunei, Thailand, South Korea, New Zealand, Vietnam, Abu Dhabi (UAE), Qatar, Hawaii (USA), Taiwan and China.⁵⁶ This includes exhibitions modelled on the *Shell Questacon Science Circus*.⁵⁷

51 Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 3.

52 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 1.

53 Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 21 and 23.

54 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 12.

55 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 12.

56 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 9.

57 Questacon, 'Encore!', <https://www.questacon.edu.au/together-engaging-a-nation/encore>, viewed 7 January 2019.

Education and research

School visits and programs

- 2.43 The educational value of Canberra's national institutions, for school and tertiary students and the broader public, and the particular significance of school visits to the work of the institutions, was a major theme in evidence given to the inquiry.
- 2.44 Annually, more than 162 000 school aged children from all over Australia travel to Canberra to learn about civics, citizenship, democracy, history, science and art.⁵⁸ This complements the national curriculum and provides students with a unique opportunity to engage with and learn about the national institutions. The Committee was told that this opportunity helps students to better understand their place in Australian society.⁵⁹
- 2.45 In particular, the opportunity to visit the national institutions based in Canberra supports students' participation in Australian democracy, through programs provided by the MoAD, the NEEC and the Parliamentary Education Office. Programs offered by MoAD are also open to the general public, encouraging greater understanding of democracy in the wider population.
- 2.46 Other institutions also emphasised the educational value of their collections and programs, including in art, history and science. Ms Mary Mulcahy from the CSIRO spoke about the qualitative effect of its education programs in the scientific sphere:
- ... 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 ... 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 what they're learning in the classroom is applied in the real world.⁶⁰
- 2.47 For school students who are unable to visit Canberra, opportunities also exist to access several national institutions' programs within their own classrooms.
- 2.48 For example, the AWM offers schools and community groups across Australia the opportunity to borrow themed boxes covering conflicts from

58 Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra 22 June 2018, p. 8.

59 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 4.

60 Ms Mary Mulcahy, Director, Education and Outreach, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 33.

the First World War until today, through its 'Memorial Box program'.⁶¹ Another example is the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's (CSIRO) Discovery Centre, which hosts live linkups to the scientific research vessel, the *RV Investigator*.⁶² This provides both students and teachers with the opportunity to ask questions about the type of research being carried out on board the ship. The NEEC provides schools with the material to conduct their own elections through the *Get Voting* program. The program teaches students about electoral processes through participation. In 2017, the centre provided approximately 250 schools throughout Australia with *Get Voting* material.⁶³

- 2.49 The National Capital Educational Tourism Project advised that national institutions enrich students' learning experience by supporting the professional development of teachers as well. Many institutions provide content and resources that 'assist teachers in delivering educational experiences related to fields of study in which they are less confident or knowledgeable'.⁶⁴
- 2.50 Challenges for national institutions in relation to school visits and educational programs are discussed in further detail in chapter 3.

Higher education and research

- 2.51 Many of the national institutions also collaborate with universities to provide tertiary students with specialised training. For example, students in the Heritage, Museums and Conservation program in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra participate in 'site visits and tours, work integrated learning, internships and higher degree research opportunities' at some of the national institutions.⁶⁵ Similarly, Questacon recruits graduate students from scientific disciplines across Australia to provide presentations to towns and schools across regional Australia as parts of the *Shell Questacon Science Circus*.⁶⁶ This not only allows Questacon to reach students in regional locations across Australia, but provides university students with the opportunity to gain on the job experience relevant to their degree.

61 Australian War Memorial *Submission 32*, p. 7.

62 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, pp. 6-7.

63 Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 21.

64 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 4.

65 Heritage, Museums and Conservation program in the Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra, *Submission 23*, p. [1].

66 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 10.

- 2.52 More broadly, the Committee was advised by Science & Technology Australia that the national institutions enable researchers across disciplines to ‘draw from a wide range of valuable and nationally significant resources, data and specimens.’⁶⁷ The Australian Historical Association submitted that the NAA and NLA provide researchers with access to a large range of historical documents.⁶⁸
- 2.53 The Australian Academy of the Humanities advised that there is a strong history of collaboration between galleries, libraries, archives and museums and the research sector in Australia, with many of the institutions supporting Australian Research Council (ARC) funded projects. Between 2001 and 2018 there were 30 ARC funded projects with a Canberra-based museum as a participating institute. Over the same period the NLA was a participating institute in over 40 ARC funded projects, and collaborated on projects involving 16 Australian universities in each state and territory.⁶⁹

Building Australia’s scientific capability

- 2.54 Evidence to the Committee highlighted that national institutions add value to Australian society by engaging the community with science and technology, and developing the nation’s scientific capability and skills.
- 2.55 In particular, DIIS noted that Questacon and the CSIRO Discovery Centre provide formal and informal opportunities for community engagement and education in science and technology.⁷⁰ The Department emphasised that this is consistent with the National Science Statement, which sets out the Australian Government’s ‘vision for an Australian society engaged in and enriched by science’.⁷¹
- 2.56 These institutions assist in supporting pride in Australian scientific achievements by introducing visitors to Canberra to Australian discoveries and scientific output.⁷² Some submitters emphasised that Questacon also plays a significant role in sharing its experience and knowledge with regional and remote communities across Australia.⁷³ This helps to ensure that appreciation and understanding of science,

67 Science & Technology Australia, *Submission 38*, p. 2.

68 Australian Historical Association, *Submission 35*, p. [1].

69 Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Submission 44*, p. 2.

70 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, pp. 6-7.

71 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 3.

72 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, pp. 6-7.

73 For example: Science Space, *Submission 49*; Australasian Science and Technology Engagement Network, *Submission 50*; and Australian Science Teachers Association, *Submission 33*.

technology, engineering and mathematics is encouraged throughout Australia.

Committee comment

- 2.57 Describing their value to the Committee, national institutions emphasised their preservation and promotion of Australia's cultural, social and political history, and the importance of these collections to our national identity. The institutions also highlighted their role in providing national and international audiences with access to and a greater understanding of Australian history and culture.
- 2.58 It was evident to the Committee, however, that Canberra's national institutions struggled to take the further step to articulating clearly how their work provided a direct benefit to the people of Australia, beyond the metrics of visitor numbers and economic gains. While rightly proud to state that they tell Australia's story, national institutions also need to justify *why* that story needs to be told, and *how* that adds value to the nation.
- 2.59 In the Committee's view, the strategic value of Canberra's national institutions lies in seeing themselves as one collective whole, and connecting the collections, exhibitions and programs of that whole directly to the people of Australia. It is giving Australia's people not just an understanding of our history, democracy, culture, art and achievements, but a sense of connection to that national picture. It is ensuring that all Australians identify their place in, feel part of, and are proud of, the story of Australia as a modern, successful and vibrant nation.
- 2.60 In the Committee's view, the lack of a shared vision among Canberra's national institutions about the role they play in developing that national cohesion and shared pride in Australia's story has been a key cause of their inability to attract increased funding during a constrained budget period.
- 2.61 The Committee regards it as essential that Canberra's national institutions articulate a clearer, and – importantly – collective understanding of their strategic value. They should understand themselves not as a set of separate and competing entities, but as a cohesive whole, with the core objective of connecting Australians to their national story. Their collective articulation of purpose and strategic impact should constitute the starting point for everything they do, and aspire to do.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Canberra’s national institutions develop and articulate a shared narrative that directly connects them with Australia’s story. That expression of shared value should underpin the work of all of the national institutions, individually and in collaboration.

- 2.62 The Committee believes that ensuring access by all Australians to Canberra’s national institutions should be a key priority. The institutions help connect citizens to a sense of identity and provide vital information about Australia’s history, culture and democratic process. Moreover, while much of the value of these institutions is unseen, they provide important benefits to both Canberra and the nation in a range of other ways including revenue from tourism, supporting education and contributing to cultural diplomacy.
- 2.63 Noting their significant strategic value, the Committee is concerned that Canberra’s national institutions must continue to be adequately supported and resourced to carry out their core functions. The intrinsic value of these institutions beyond quantitative measures needs to be considered, to ensure there is a holistic and long-term approach enabling them not just to survive, but to grow and evolve with the nation.
- 2.64 More detailed discussion about public engagement, governance and resourcing of the institutions is provided in the following chapters.

