

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

**Group 2**

**Question No. 116**

**Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2014:**

The answer to the question at the hearings about the report in *The Age* 4 Jan 2014 is noted, that ASIO has sold off archival ASIO film, apparently for its silver content. The answer was that the Director-General could find no basis for the report. Following on from that answer, does the film referred to still exist in the Archives? What safeguards are in place to protect similar artefacts of high historical and cultural value?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

The Archives could find no basis for the statement reported in *The Age* on 4 January 2014 that 'someone inside the National Archive of Australia recommended to ASIO that they could sell the films for the value of the silver content they contained' and therefore has no knowledge of whether the films referred to ever existed or still exist.

ASIO records, including film and photographs, are transferred to the Archives in response to an application for access under the *Archives Act 1983*. All ASIO records in the custody of the Archives are listed on the Archives' online collection database, RecordSearch. If ASIO records are not already in custody, the Archives will assist researchers make an application for access and notify them of the outcome.

The retention and destruction of Commonwealth records, including those created by ASIO are approved through records authorities issued by the Director-General of the National Archives under s 24(2)(b) and s 3c of the *Archives Act 1983*. This includes identifying records that have enduring national significance that are to be retained as national archives.