



WHAT'S THE NEWS? ISSUE 18

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**FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE INC**  
Founding Patrons: Gil Brealey, Bryan Brown, Anthony Buckley, Scott Hicks,  
Patricia Lovell, Chris Noonan, Michael Pate, Fred Schepisi, Albie Thoms

**'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'** Margaret Mead

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Hello Friends and welcome to another issue of *What's the News?*

This issue presents the latest information on the Review on Australian Government Film Funding Support, gives a brief report of November's SEAPAVAA Conference, foreshadows the Museums Australia National Conference in May and highlights a few choice moments from Hansard.

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**NFSA FUTURE AND THE REVIEW—WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE OCTOBER?**

We are all waiting for the outcome of the Review of Government Film Funding Support, which it is expected will impact on the future of the NFSA.

In our previous issue, we published material from the joint submission to the Review, lodged by the Friends, Archive Forum, Australian Society of Archivists and Australian Historical Association.

In Senate Estimates on 31 October 2006 (see Link 1 below), Minister Kemp was questioned on the Government's intentions, and while noting that it was ALP policy to merge the AFC and FFC (and so reduce the number of film agencies), he would not be drawn on whether that would be a likely finding of the Review. The Secretary of DCITA, Helen Williams, commented that the Review would be considered in the Budget context.

Minister Kemp added: 'The first stage of the Review is virtually complete. There are some consultations occurring. That review will be put to me. Then I will have to make proposals to the government, and the government will have to decide whether to accept my proposals. That is the general process. The normal process would be for this to be viewed in the budget context, but the government will have to make a decision just when and how it will deal with the Review.'

In January, Senator Kemp was replaced as Minister for the Arts by Senator George Brandis, who appeared before the next Senate Estimates hearings on 13 February 2007. He was asked a series of questions about the

NFSA and its future status. You can read the questions along with Brandis's answers online (see Link 2 below). Senator Brandis responded that he had only been in the portfolio a couple of weeks, and his responses were generally non-committal. In relation to the Review, he said that he had been 'getting around the various stakeholders to continue dialogue with each of them. It is part of the budget process and the outcome of that process is something of which we will have news in due course'.

Senator Conroy asked: *'Has the Minister read the document Independent Statutory Authority Status for the National Film and Sound Archive, jointly released by the Australian Society of Archivists, the Archive Forum, Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive and the Australian Historical Association in July 2006 and subsequently submitted to the review on Australian government film funding support?'*

Minister Brandis answered: *'I have been briefed on the document. I have not read the document through.'*

And later, Senator Conroy asked: *'Is the Minister aware of the resolution adopted by the annual general meeting of the Australian Society of Archivists on 19 October 2006 which reads: The ASA urges that any structural rearrangements arising from the Review which impact on the National Film and Sound Archive be most carefully considered because it now lacks its own council or other high level government body to represent its interests during the current process. It is appropriate for professional bodies like the ASA to be its advocate.'*

*'Will the review lead to sensible, perfect and careful public consultation about any steps affecting the NFSA before actions are finally decided by government?'*

Minister Brandis responded: *'You asked two questions. The answer to the first question is: the resolution has been drawn to my attention. The answer to the second question is that the matter is the subject of consideration by government and you can be reassured that whatever consultations are appropriate to have taken place have or will take place.'*

Finally, Senator Conroy asked: *'Will the Minister release for public information the report and other documents of the 2002-03 review of cultural institutions which led to the integration of the National Film and Sound Archive, then known as ScreenSound Australia, with the Australian Film Commission?'*

To which Minister Brandis responded: *'No, because I am advised that was a budget-in-confidence paper.'*

It would appear, therefore, that we can't expect any formal announcement about the outcome of the Review until the 2007 Budget is brought down in mid-May.

And like the outcome of the 2002-03 Review, the essential documentation leading to the outcome may again be classified as budget-in-confidence and therefore not publicly released.

We are glad the Minister has committed himself to 'appropriate consultations' and the Friends will remind him of their availability for consultations.

Link 1: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commttee/S9769.pdf> (see pages ECITA 70 to 72)

Link 2: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commttee/S9940.pdf> (see pages ECITA 23 and 24)

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## **MORE HANSARD MOMENTS**

This exchange is from the 31 October Senate Estimates hearing and it's rather cute! Just goes to show one shouldn't rush through the Hansard too quickly!

Senator Wortley—*Does the FFC have a view on the future of the National Film and Sound Archive?*

Mr Rosen—*The FFC? It does not come under our auspices other than we put money into films and obviously we would like to see them preserved.*

Senator Wortley—*Do you believe that it should be an independent, autonomous institution?*

Senator Kemp—*You might call that 'leading the witness', Senator. You have had a little too much Perry Mason, I think, in your youth.*

Senator Wortley—*I am sure Mr Rosen can answer these questions.*

Senator Kemp—*It does not come within the FFC. It is under the auspices—*

Senator Wortley—*I am sure they have an opinion.*

Senator Kemp—*I am on the record of never directing officers here, every officer is free, but Mr Rosen made a very valuable point. If it does not come within his auspices—*

Senator Wortley—*Perhaps I could rephrase that.*

Senator Kemp—*We had this debate a long time ago—even before you arrived. Senator Lundy and I used to lock horns regularly on this issue.*

Senator Wortley—*Considering the current review, what does the FFC see as a best outcome for the future position of the National Film and Sound Archive?*

Mr Rosen—*At the moment, where it sits with the AFC is a very good position to be in. In the event that out of the review there is a recommendation to change the agency structure, then I think there is an opportunity to look at the best way this new organisation should work.*

Senator Wortley—*I thank the minister for that.*

Senator Kemp—*I think you are unduly suspicious, Senator; unduly suspicious.*

**Senator Dana Wortley** is a South Australian Labor Senator

**Mr Rosen** is the Chief Executive of the Film Finance Corporation Australia

**Senator Kemp** was Minister for the Arts and Sport from 26 November 2001 to 30 January 2007

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## **NEW MINISTER FOR ARTS AND SPORT—A QUICK SKETCH**

George Brandis, new to the portfolio of federal arts minister, is a lawyer who, before entering politics seven years ago, worked as a barrister with a large practice in trade practices law. Brandis takes over as Minister for Arts and Sport from Senator Rod Kemp, who was Minister for the Arts and Sport from 26 November 2001 to 30 January 2007.

Forty-nine year-old Brandis, born in Sydney and educated in Brisbane, was admitted as a barrister twenty years ago, after graduating from Oxford University with a bachelor in civil law. He was recently made senior counsel. On the leisure side, he is interested in histories and biographies and has a collection of rare books.

'His priority, before the May budget, is to finalise a film-industry package aimed at increasing private investment in film and TV. The package, thought to be worth \$60 million, may involve the merger of the Australian Film Commission and Film Finance Corporation Australia.'

*Some of the information above was taken from Valerie Lawson's Sydney Morning Herald article of 19 February 2007 <http://www.smh.com.au/news/arts/contrary-to-opinion-its-fine-by-the-minister/2007/02/18/1171733607764.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap2>*

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## **REPORT ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE OF SEAPAVAA**

The Friends and the Archive Forum were well represented at the SEAPAVAA (South East Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association) conference held in Canberra from 13 to 17 November last year, and the conference papers are available for downloading online at <http://www.seapavaa.org/homesite/2006Conf.htm>

Friends may be particularly interested in reading the following, which all have reference to the NFSA situation:

Andrew Pike: *The Role of Friends' Organisations*

Ray Edmondson: *When Governments Make Mistakes*

Chris Puplick: *Politics of Persuasion*

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## **SEARCH THE COLLECTION IS LIVE**

*Search the Collection* is now available online, which means you can search the NFSA's collection online. The NFSA have implemented an improved free-text search tool that gives you much improved online access to information on the 700 000+ items in the collection. It is also now easier for you to navigate through your search results. The new Google-style interface includes a range of criteria you can use to quickly refine your search. Instead of structuring a full search request, you can enter a broad keyword, then simply narrow your results by criteria such as production year, format, or accessibility. Complex searches have also been made easier with an upgraded Advanced Search option. A link for feedback can be found on the initial search screen. Give the site a try and let the NFSA know what you think.

<http://www.nfsa.afc.gov.au/searchthecollection>

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## AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS NEWS

### MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE—*MUSEUMS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE*

A 7 February meeting of various Canberra-based Friends' associations agreed to organise a session focusing on Friends and Volunteers for the Museums Australia Conference, which will take place in Canberra on 17 to 20 May. The format of this one and a half hour session will be to present three speakers, who will then take part in a panel session. The session will be a 'joint' Museums Australia (Members (Friends and Volunteers) Special Interest Group), Australian Federation of Friends of Museums session

The session is planned for first up on Thursday 17 May and a space has been allocated in Old Parliament House, where a number of other Special Interest Group sessions are being held. Further sessions will take place that afternoon at the National Archives and the National Gallery. Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive President, Andrew Pike, will present a version of his recent paper *The Role of Friends Organisations*.

The session will have joint billing as a Museums Australia Special Interest Group/Australian Federation of Friends of Museums event reflecting our relationship as set down in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two bodies. Whilst our group will liaise with representatives of the Friends and Volunteers Special Interest Group of Museums Australia, Susan Bridie, the President of the Special Interest Groups, is happy for us to take the running. <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/>

The groups represented at the February meeting also agreed to get together later in the year under the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums banner to further discuss the AFFM's Annual General Meeting (due before December) and possible associated events—such as a one-day seminar.

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## ABOUT THE FRIENDS

The Friends is a group of advocates, working to further the aims of the Archive and to encourage links between the Archive, the film and sound communities and the general community. In essence, the Friends want to promote excellence in film and sound culture, including: best practice in preservation, public programs and access; promoting high level appreciation of film and sound heritage and contemporary culture; creativity in the use of our Archive; and a broad, outward looking focus that locates Australia in the South East Asia-Pacific region and globally.

To achieve our ends, we rely on Friends to contribute energy and enthusiasm, and to participate in events that will provide the resources. You can never have too many friends. Please encourage your friends and colleagues to join us. And if you feel you would like to contribute by joining our committee, don't hesitate to contact us.

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter and we would love to hear from you on any Friends topic. You can contact us at [info@archivefriends.org](mailto:info@archivefriends.org) or ring us on 6248 0851.

**There are many ways that you can help:**

☺ Helping with the newsletter ☺ Becoming a committee member ☺ Word processing or database work  
☺ Writing letters ☺ Helping to photocopy and collate documents ☺ Signing up your family members and  
friends as new Friends ☺ Helping with fundraising ☺ Attending rallies ☺ Working on a stall ☺ Attending  
events. Please don't hesitate to put up your hand for any of these activities by emailing us at  
[info@archivefriends.org](mailto:info@archivefriends.org). All offers of assistance will be greatly appreciated.

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**WITH BEST WISHES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE,**

Lucy Battersby, Shelley Clarke, Adrian Cunningham, Ray Edmondson, Andy Hayllar, Chris Harrison, Peter  
Hislop, Fred Mitchell, Andrew Pike, Cheryl Stevenson and Simon Weaving.

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