
NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE: THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Factors shaping the uneven development of a
cultural institution

Ray Edmondson BA Dip Lib

Thesis submitted to the University of Canberra for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Communication in the Faculty of Arts and
Design

December 2011

CONTENTS

NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE: THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY	A
Certificate of authorship	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Abstract	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background, object and significance of the study.....	3
Research question	6
1.2 Approach to the historical study.....	8
1.3 Oral history program	12
1.4 Ethics: the issue of objectivity.....	16
1.5 Background on audiovisual archives	18
1.6 Structure of the thesis	22
Chapter 2 Literature review.....	25
2.1 Introduction	27
2.2 History and profession.....	29
2.3 Evolution, mergers and demergers	40
2.4 Stakeholders, advocacy and ethics.....	45
2.5 Use of management consultants	50
2.6 Marketing, positioning and branding	54
2.6.1 Theory and practice of branding.....	55
2.6.2 Rebranding.....	59
2.7 Conclusions.....	66
Chapter 3 The NFSA: a historical overview	69
3.1 Antecedents: the National Library period – 1935 to 1984.....	71
3.1.1 Prehistory of an Australian Film and Sound archive 1935-1970.....	71
3.1.2 National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library (NHFR) – and successor	72

3.1.3	New home, new times.....	81
3.1.4	FIAF and The Edmondson report	91
3.1.5	AFC Working party on the NFA.....	97
3.1.6	Towards the Archives Act	100
3.1.7	Tensions on the road to autonomy: 1981-83	104
3.1.8	Advisory Committee on the NFA (NFAAC).....	110
3.1.9	Access restrictions	114
3.1.10	The 'Nicholas Clark Report' (NC)	116
3.1.11	Dynamics and tensions in the NLA.....	119
3.1.12	Tensions become public	121
3.1.13	Public controversy	127
3.1.14	Independence.....	133
3.2	Transition and establishment: 1984 -86	138
3.2.1	The transition: 1984.....	138
3.2.2	Organisation, governance, the IDC and <i>Time in our hands</i>	142
3.2.3	NFSA as a place – and an image	145
3.2.4	Professional identity	147
3.3	The developing archive: 1986 -1999	150
3.3.1	Introduction.....	150
3.3.2	Seeking a statute: the quest for legislation	154
3.3.3	Building a professional corporate culture.....	155
3.3.4	The colour film crisis and COMAT	160
3.3.5	International.....	165
3.3.6	Public recognition: building the brand.....	166
3.4	Rebranded: the ScreenSound saga – 1999 to 2003	168
3.4.1	Introduction.....	168
3.4.2	A new Advisory Council.....	170
3.4.3	The research project	173

3.4.4	Launch of ScreenSound Australia	181
3.4.5	Reactions to the rebranding.....	183
3.4.6	Emerging problems	187
3.4.7	Restoring “archive” and managing multiple brands	190
3.4.8	Friends of the NFSA (FNFSA).....	192
3.4.9	The Minister weighs in	193
3.4.10	Managing the constituency	196
3.4.11	The cost of rebranding	198
3.4.12	Stalemate.....	201
3.4.13	Conclusion	204
3.5	A policy failure: the Australian Film Commission takeover - 2003 to 2008.....	207
3.5.1	Introduction.....	207
3.5.2	The Review of Cultural Agencies.....	208
3.5.3	Cautious optimism	212
3.5.4	Amending the AFC Act.....	215
3.5.5	Stakeholder Consultation.....	221
3.5.6	“Directions’ – the AFC plan	224
3.5.7	The response to <i>Directions</i>	229
3.5.8	Beginning the drive for statutory independence	234
3.5.9	NFSA identity and profile.....	242
3.5.10	The problem with sound	244
3.5.11	Transition: Kim Dalton departs	245
3.6	Reaching a new beginning: the NFSA Act 2008.....	248
3.6.1	The last lobbying document.....	248
3.6.2	The National Film and Sound Archive Act.....	250
Chapter 4	Interviews.....	253
4.1	Introduction	255
4.2	Interview extracts.....	256

4.2.1	Context of the film and sound archives in the NLA	256
4.2.2	1984: Separation from the National Library	258
4.2.3	The post-1984 NFSA	260
4.2.4	The rebranding and its prelude	263
4.2.5	After the rebranding: reactions and evaluations.....	271
4.2.6	Merger with the Australian Film Commission.....	282
4.2.7	The National Film and Sound Archive Act, 2008.....	293
4.2.8	Remaining questions.....	296
Chapter 5	Analysis.....	301
5.1	Introduction.....	303
5.2	Emergence as part of the NLA 1935-1980.....	304
5.3	Separation from the NLA -1983-84.....	316
5.4	The rebranding - 1999.....	329
5.5	Merger with the AFC - 2003.....	342
5.6	Demerger and achievement of statutory status -2008	353
Chapter 6	Conclusions	359
6.1	Introduction: Why the NFSA emerged – and why it took so long	361
6.2	The historical period	364
6.3	Effects and risks	368
6.4	Broader consequences	370
6.5	Duty of care – specific effects.....	372
6.6	Lessons.....	374
6.7	Personal reflections.....	376
6.8	Further research	386
Appendices	389
1	List of acronyms	391
2	Timeline	395
3	Ethics Approval.....	399

4	Autoethnography: reflections at the beginning of a personal journey.....	405
5	Pro-forma Oral history invitation letters and draft questions.....	411
6	Branding and positioning concepts.....	419
7	Extracts from “No gray profession’.....	423
8	Branding rationale.....	431
9	NLA campaign documents.....	447
10	List of interviewees	453
11	Lost heritage.....	457
12	Bibliography.....	461

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1	<i>Darkie</i> to <i>Darlie</i> : successful transfer of brand equity	60
Fig 2	NFSA Headquarters, Acton ACT circa 2000	144
Fig 3	NFSA and ScreenSound logos	181
Fig 4	A week is a long time: <i>Canberra Times</i> front pages 12 and 18 December 1999	224
Fig 5	Geoff Pryor cartoons in <i>Canberra Times</i> 14 and 18 December 1999	226

Certificate of authorship

Except where clearly acknowledged in footnotes, quotations and the bibliography, I certify that I am the sole author of the thesis submitted today entitled:

National Film and Sound Archive: the quest for identity

I further certify that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The material in this thesis has not been the basis of an award or any other degree or diploma except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The thesis complies with University requirements for a thesis as set out in Gold Book Part 7: Examination of Higher Degree by Research Theses Policy, Schedule Two (S2). Refer to <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research-students/goldbook>

.....

Signature of candidate

.....

Signature of chair of the supervisory panel

Date:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank the many people who have been part of this research project.

My supervisors, Assistant Professor Stuart Ferguson and Professor Greg Battye, and the chair of my original supervisory panel (when this project began at Charles Sturt University) Professor Ross Harvey. I am particularly grateful to Stuart, who was a member of that original panel and has chaired the panel since the project moved to the University of Canberra, for his thoughtful and incisive advice and encouragement.

My wife Sue has served as my research assistant throughout the project. Her patient searching of the manuscript, oral history and literature holdings in the National Library and elsewhere has yielded the depth of references used in this thesis.

All those who took part in the oral history component of the project freely gave of their time and their recollections, notwithstanding the personal sensitivities inherent in the subject matter. Their cooperation brought new information to light. I am grateful to Ms Roslyn Russell for her expert conduct of the interview sessions.

Andrew Pike, Graham Shirley and Michael Piggott commented at various times on progress drafts of Chapter 3, and their scrutiny ensured that omissions and factual inaccuracies were corrected. Their advice was greatly appreciated.

Tom Campbell of the Friends of the National Museum provided and contextualised oral histories from the Friends' corporate memory.

The staff of the National Library, National Archives and National Film and Sound Archive all willingly assisted the project and located information as it was needed. The NFSA provided copious photocopies of Council and Executive minutes and other source documents, and present and former staff delved into their corporate memories whenever requested.

During this year, at some inconvenience to themselves, colleagues in institutions here and overseas allowed me to postpone my regular commitments with them so that I could stay in Canberra and focus on completing this thesis.

On an eight year journey, past and present colleagues and fellow researchers have responded to questions and informed and stimulated my thinking. They are far too many to enumerate but I am grateful for their part in the journey.

Ray Edmondson

21 December 2011

ABSTRACT

The project is a historical study, from an interpretivist perspective and with overtones of action research, of a major cultural institution, the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA). It traces its erratic and protracted evolution from 1935, as an entity within the then Commonwealth National Library, to 2008, when it finally gained enabling legislation and independent statutory status.

My original contribution to knowledge is in documenting its first in-depth corporate history, in challenging mythology, received wisdom and published accounts particularly of its earlier years, and in shedding new light on causes and effects at its critical transition points.

In exploring the reasons for its uneven development and its struggle for identity, the study also considers the attendant risks for the national audiovisual heritage, the losses which have been a consequence of those risks, and the lessons which may be learned. The evidential basis for the study is a broad range of published and unpublished documents, a series of oral history recordings with key individuals, and relevant literature.

Findings are analysed against five “turning points” in the NFSA’s history:

- Emergence within the structure of the National Library
- Demerger from the Library in 1984 to become an autonomous institution
- “Repositioning” and “rebranding” as ScreenSound Australia in 1999

- Merger with the Australian Film Commission in 2003
- Demerger from the Commission and the gaining of statutory status in 2008

None of these stages was a benign experience. Most happened in the glare of media and political controversy, back-room bureaucratic manoeuvring and the public involvement of advocacy groups. For example, the bitterness surrounding the 1984 demerger from the National Library left deeply embedded conspiracy theories in its wake, which cast long shadows. Or again, the 2003 forced merger with the much smaller Australian Film Commission almost resulted in the destruction of the NFSA. Questions about personal and institutional ethics, public officials' duty of care, managerial and financial competence, and the role of public activism, emerge repeatedly.

The study documents how the NFSA survived the domination of three different institutional and bureaucratic cultures – a library, a portfolio department and film industry promotional agency – demonstrating the resilience and validity of the independent audiovisual archive concept, a creation of the twentieth century.

The study has discovered new information which illuminates motives and events, and is the first major exercise in documenting the emergence of what is now recognised as one of the world's leading national audiovisual archives. It is a history of the causes and consequences (as opposed to a history of collections, activities or buildings) which finally brought the NFSA to the threshold of a legal personality and a legislated mandate.

It can be clearly seen that the word “archives” has only a limited application. In recent years, in Australia, we have seen a distressing tendency for national collections of cinematographic film or of sound recordings to be dignified by the use of the word. It is difficult for the present writer to understand why the proponents of a national film library should want to call it a “National Film Archive.”

Robert C Sharman, from his essay in *Design for diversity: library services for higher education and research in Australia* ed. Harrison Bryan and Gordon Greenwood, University of Queensland Press, 1977 (Sharman "Archives and Research ")

1.1 BACKGROUND, OBJECT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is a historical study on the quest for identity, independence and good governance of the national memory institution known today as the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), a statutory authority¹ headquartered in Canberra, with branch offices in Melbourne and Sydney. While it touches on personalities and the development of collections, activities and technical capacities where necessary, this is not a comprehensive corporate history. It is rather a story of events, circumstances and ideas tracing the period from 1935 to 2008.

The NFSA and its predecessors were known by a variety of names over this time, some expressive of its nature and aspirations, some of its subjugation to other ideas and agendas. It moved through several shared physical locations until gaining its own building, Canberra's former Institute of Anatomy. It was originally part of the structure and culture of a national library, where it operated with growing unease until parting company with its parent in 1984. It then became an autonomous outrider temporarily attached to a Government Department for nineteen years, until its forced amalgamation with a film promotional authority for a further five. In 2008 it finally re-emerged, now as a statutory authority in its own right.

¹ Established in accordance with the *National Film and Sound Archive Act*, 2008

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION

In 1901 a joint library committee was formed by the new federal parliament, which met in Melbourne until 1927. It relied in practical terms on the resources and staff of the Victorian Parliamentary Library and the Public Library of Victoria. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library (CPL) became a library of deposit under the 1912 Copyright Act, and began to develop a collection of Australiana to which the title Commonwealth National Library (CNL) was first applied in 1923. After it transferred to Canberra in 1927, this latter title came to refer to the whole institution, although in these early years the exact evolution of nomenclature is unclear.²

The NFSA's quest began in 1935 with the creation by Federal Cabinet of the *National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library* (NHFR), jointly administered by the CNL and the Cinema Branch of the Department of Commerce. It collected films and sound recordings for preservation but ceased operation during World War II. The CNL's Film Division (FD), established in 1945 as a lending library, inherited its role and resumed the collection of films for preservation in the 1950s. The Paton committee³ determined that the CNL be split into the present National Library of Australia (NLA), the Parliamentary Library, and a Commonwealth Archives Office (CAO) based on the CNL's Archives Division. The committee considered but did not support the proposition that the CNL's Film Division should become separate body, leaving it with the NLA.

In 1984, following protracted public debate, the Government established the NFSA as an entity separate from the NLA, but remaining, like most other national memory

² John Balnaves and Peter Biskup, *Australian Libraries*, Second edition ed. (London: Clive Bingley, 1975), Peter Biskup and Doreen Goodman, *Australian Libraries*, Third edition ed. (1982), Andrew D Osborn and Margaret Osborn, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Library 1901-27 and the Origins of the National Library of Australia* (Department of the Parliamentary Library, National Library of Australia, 1989).

³ National Library Enquiry Committee 1956-57, *Report* (1957). It is generally known as the Paton Committee after its Chairman, Professor George W Paton.

institutions, in the same portfolio department. The NFSA now had its own public identity and substantial practical autonomy, but lacked the protection or guidance of an enabling Act of Parliament.

In 1999 it was “rebranded” for five years as *ScreenSound Australia*. By 2001 it was poised to gain formal status as an Executive Agency, but the process was aborted. Instead, in 2003, the NFSA was ‘integrated’ with the Australian Film Commission (AFC). While it soon reverted to its former name, the ‘integration’ proved a policy failure which threatened NFSA’s very survival. A sustained public campaign by advocacy groups led to its long overdue establishment as an independent statutory authority in 2008. The NFSA’s long emergence involved some bitter political struggles. The building of a distinctive professional identity and ethos, with only limited international precedent, was a pioneering, experimental but essential task. In some respects it is still a work in progress.

OBJECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Over the years there have been many articles touching on aspects of the NFSA’s history and collections, but there is still no substantive history of the institution. This thesis aims to partially fill that space, and make a useful addition to the existing corporate histories of memory institutions, especially of audiovisual archives. It is motivated by the conviction that institutions like the NFSA, which are guardians of a nation’s memory, need to also preserve their *own* memory, to know how and why they have come to be what they are, and to avoid reliance on assumptions and mythology. It is fundamental to their ethos, identity and public accountability.

The study seeks to answer the questions inherent in the NFSA's emergence. Having been one of the earliest nations to institutionally recognise the permanent cultural value of films and sound recordings, how did Australia lose this early impetus? Why did it for so long lag behind other countries in its financial, institutional and legislative provision for its audiovisual heritage? What heritage material was lost as a result? Why was the emergence of an autonomous national audiovisual archive so strenuously resisted, and later undermined? What faults in our political and bureaucratic systems did this reveal? These questions are explored in the following chapters.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The NFSA is tasked with preserving and providing access to Australia's audiovisual heritage in accordance with the *National Film and Sound Archive Act 2008*, which defines its legal identity and mandate. The journey to the Act took seventy three years. Although its work required organisational permanence and continuity, specialist expertise, public trust and public recognition, all of these things, along with the collected heritage itself, were at various times challenged or jeopardised by the course of events. The vicissitudes of the NFSA's evolution have affected the shape and influence of that surviving heritage. The knowledge and lessons of that history will be lost unless causes and effects are documented and analysed. Hence the research question on which this study is based:

- **What were the historical factors that made the emergence of the NFSA so erratic and protracted? What were the effects and risks and how were they dealt with? What were the broader consequences? What lessons may be learned?**

This overarching question embraces some sub-questions:

- **What is the history of the NFSA?**
- **Why did the NFSA emerge at all, and why did it take so long?**
- **What was the influence of the NFSA's operational context and circumstances: professional, government, administrative?**

In exploring the sub-questions the study considers several specific factors including:

- **Branding**
- **Mergers and demergers**
- **Use of consultants**
- **Advocacy groups**
- **People, personality types and leadership**

1.2 APPROACH TO THE HISTORICAL STUDY

History is a process of selection in terms of historical significance... 'a selective system' not only of cognitive, but of causal, orientations to reality. Just as from the infinite ocean of facts the historian selects those which are significant for his purpose, so from the multiplicity of sequences of cause and effect he extracts those, and only those, which are historically significant; and the standard of historical significance is his ability to fit them into his pattern of rational explanation and interpretation.⁴

The project is a historical study with an interpretivist perspective.⁵ It draws on a range of written and audiovisual qualitative evidence which can be characterised as follows:

- The institution as it wants to be seen : published documents like annual reports, media releases, policy documents, brochures
- The institution as others see it: such as media articles, professional journals, TV and radio, newsletters, statements of advocacy groups
- The unpublished record: such as internal reports, correspondence, meeting minutes
- Personal recollections, such as oral histories
- Existing histories and literature

In relation to particular events, different sources do not always agree. Exploring the contradictions and discerning the motivations behind the creation of the evidence is an aspect of the study. Some events became mythologised; some documents are lost, suppressed, censored or were otherwise unavailable for this study.

⁴ Edward Hallett Carr, What Is History? : The George Macauley Trevelyan Memorial Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge January-March 1961 (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1964, c1961 (1984 [printing]), 2008). p 105

⁵ Graeme Johansen, "Historical Research," Research Methods for Students and Professionals, ed. Kirsty Williamson (Wagga Wagga: Charles Sturt University, 2000)..

ASSEMBLY AND CHRONOLOGY

The initial task was to identify, assemble and collate the author's own extensive personal papers and documents in chronological sequence. Subsequently other published and unpublished material was located in institutional collections, on the internet, or in the hands of individuals and organisations. Some documents were obtained under Freedom of Information (FOI) provisions, and some of these were provided in censored form only. A detailed timeline was compiled to embrace all significant events, accessible documents and developments. A summary timeline is at Appendix 2.

To complement the written and audiovisual evidence, personal recollections were accessed to seek insights into causes, views and motives that would never have been written down. These included oral histories of relevant personalities in institutional collections – principally former senior NLA staff, some of them no longer living. In addition, new oral history interviews were recorded as part of the project. These were based on a standardised list of topics relating to the research question. The choice of interviewees and the context of the interviews are explained in section 1.3.

A literature review was conducted (Chapter 2). From the collated evidence a narrative was developed (Chapter 3). The new oral histories were analysed separately (Chapter 4). From these three sources a general analysis was derived (Chapter 5) leading to conclusions (Chapter 6).

SCOPE OF SOURCES

The potential sources of data are almost limitless, given the tens of thousands of documents produced over such a long period which are the product of, or relevant to, the work of the NFSA, embracing the thousands of people who have worked in it, used its collections, donated to it, visited its exhibitions and so on. The selected sources have to be confined to a manageable level. They fall into several groups.

- **Published official documents** such as annual reports of NLA, NFSA, AFC and portfolio departments, project and enquiry reports, Hansard, ministerial statements, corporate plans, legislation, media releases, newsletters, publicity materials, policy documents, books and articles and so on. These are readily identifiable and I have endeavoured to embrace all such documents relevant to the research question.
- **Media:** preserved radio and television programs, news and public affairs items and press coverage, insofar as they can be identified in institutional catalogues and elsewhere, as well as relevant articles in professional journals and public submissions relating to the NFSA.
- **Internal documents:** Reports, proceedings, ministerial submissions, internal memos and the like emanating from councils, committees and management of the NLA, NFSA and the portfolio department. Some of these documents, when identified, were obtained under Freedom of Information provisions. Also included were the staff association newsletters of the NLA.
- **Oral histories** of relevant personalities held in institutional collections, and written personal recollections. Because of restrictions imposed by interviewees or donors, or processing backlogs in the institution, some material could not be accessed or permission to quote could not be obtained.
- The statements, publications and documents of **individuals** and of **advocacy groups** for the National Film Archive (NFA) and Sound Recording (SR) sections of the NLA, and the NFSA, such as the Association for a National Film and

Television Archive (AFTA), International Association of Sound Archives (IASA) Australian branch, Archive Forum (AF), the Friends of the NFSA (FNFSA) and the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA).

- Relevant **histories** of memory institutions in Australia and overseas.

A note about my personal papers: Since the late 1960s, in the knowledge that some materials were unlikely to be kept as formal records, I have consciously retained copies of both published and unpublished documents and correspondence which in my view represented significant developments in the NFA's and NFSA's corporate history. These relate to several of the above categories: they range from reports and work diaries to in-house stationery and ephemera, like film can labels, and currently total around a dozen shelf metres.

Currently these papers and related audiovisual documents are retained in my possession, organised chronologically in filing cabinets, or in subject groups on shelves. Because they constitute a primary resource for future researchers, the audiovisual (AV) documents are being progressively duplicated by the NFSA, and the papers will be donated to the NFSA's document collection when I no longer need to have frequent access to them. ⁶

Where unpublished document sources are cited in the text or footnotes without locational information, the items are held in my personal papers. They may or may not also be held in the files of the NLA or NFSA, but it is the copy in my personal papers that has been the reference source.

⁶

The arrangement is documented in a letter of agreement from NFSA CEO Darryl McIntyre, 25 May 2010

1.3 ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION: RATIONALE AND SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES

A new series of oral history recordings were made as part of the project.⁷ I was investigating the tacit knowledge of players in the historical events, in order to capture recollections and mature reflections before they were lost. The interviews have thereby become explicit knowledge and documentary information for future researchers. In the nature of oral history, the vagaries of memory can intrude and recollections may differ from chronological facts. To be useful, the interviews needed to cover potentially sensitive issues and the interviewees had to be assured that a degree of confidentiality acceptable to them would be observed.

The program aimed for a practical number of around a dozen interviewees, directly related to the events covered in this study, who could provide first hand recollections and reflections from their time of connection with the NFSA. As far as possible the group needed to be diverse geographically, in the character of their relationship to the NFSA, and in viewpoints.

From a larger potential pool, an initial list of fifty five names was drawn up. It included former and current NFSA Council and Board members, former and current NFSA staff at various levels of seniority, service providers to the NFSA, politicians, members of various NFSA stakeholder groups, staff of other collecting institutions, journalists and commentators, and members of the international AV archiving community. In

⁷ Kirsty Williamson, "Research Techniques: Questionnaires and Interviews " Research Methods for Students and Professionals ed. Kirsty Williamson (Wagga Wagga: Charles Sturt University, 2000).

consultation with my head supervisor, Assistant Professor Stuart Ferguson, this list was progressively reduced to fifteen names, with a reserve list of four in case of refusals. For practical reasons, overseas names were eliminated and the geographic reach was confined to the eastern states of Australia. However, the chosen fifteen reflected the diversity of the original fifty five. A personalised invitation letter and package was sent to each of these. A pro-forma copy of the package is at [Appendix 5](#).

Some refusals were expected. In the event, one of the fifteen declined the invitation (but volunteered some brief email comments) and one did not respond at all. The remaining thirteen were interviewed. Their average age was in their fifties; the duration of their connection with the NFSA, whether continuous or intermittent, ranged from two to thirty years; and their involvement with the institution was integral rather than incidental. Most would be deemed senior rather than junior people in their spheres of activity.

The interviews were recorded over an eighteen month period, between September 2009 and April 2011. The duration of the program turned on the personal availability of the interviewee and interviewer, and their geographic location.

THE INTERVIEWS: METHOD, CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCURACY

In the interests of maximising the objectivity of the interviews, I made a deliberate choice to have them conducted by a third party, Ms Roslyn Russell. Ms Russell is an experienced Canberra-based museum consultant and interviewer. She is a long time observer of the NLA and NFSA but has never been an employee or participant in any of

the respects mentioned above. She was briefed by me before each interview and subsequently delivered to me the resulting sound recording and transcript.⁸

Prior to their interview, each person received a timeline (an abbreviated version of [Appendix 2](#)) and a standardised list of questions ([Appendix 5](#)) to serve as a point of departure. In two cases the list was varied because most of the questions would have been irrelevant to the interviewee concerned. Interviewees were asked to concentrate on those questions of direct interest to them. Notwithstanding, each interview took off in its own direction. The average length was about one hour. Each interview was transcribed, and the interviewee was sent a transcript to check for accuracy. All corrections returned were taken note of.

Complete confidentiality was observed throughout. None of the interviewees was informed about who else was on the interview list. The list remained confidential to me, Ms Russell and my supervisors. In accordance with the approval given by the Committee for Ethics in Human Research (project No. 09-29 – approval documents are at [Appendix 3](#)) all interviewees completed a consent form (pro-forma at [Appendix 5](#)) specifying the disposition of their interview recording and transcript, and whether or not they wished to be identified by name in this thesis or in any reports resulting from the research. Some interviewees were happy to be identified, others were not. Some were happy for their interviews to be transferred to an institutional collection such as the NFSa, while others wished to have both interview and transcript returned to them at the end of the University's regulation period.

This mix of requirements has determined the manner in which interviewees' comments have been collated and presented in Chapter 4. This chapter was sent, in draft, to each interviewee and feedback was incorporated into the final text of the chapter or, if

⁸ I participated in the recording of the first interview in September 2009, as a way of easing Ms Russell into her role and testing the validity of the standard list of questions, which were subsequently fine tuned.

appropriate, elsewhere in the thesis. Those interviewees willing to be identified, and their reason for selection, are listed in Appendix 10.

1.4 ETHICS: THE ISSUE OF OBJECTIVITY

I joined the NLA as Film Reference Librarian in 1968, and retired as Deputy Director of the NFSA in April 2001. For an unbroken thirty three years I was, by definition, an ‘inside’ player in the events covered in this study. Since 2001, as a professional consultant, NFSA Curator Emeritus and general supporter of the NFSA, and a member of related professional and advocacy groups, I have authored articles and papers and have otherwise expressed opinions about issues within the scope of this study. While this background carries the risk of subjectivity in assessing past events, it also gives me a more intimate insight into the life and culture of the NLA and NFSA than an external researcher could ever have.

The risk of subjectivity has been addressed in two ways. First, by autoethnography. Early in the project, in July 2005, I recorded some reflections on my role in the NFSA’s story ([Appendix 4](#)). On its completion in 2011, I reviewed the journey, revisited my original assumptions, and reflected on how the journey had affected my interpretation of events. (Chapter 6).

Second, in obtaining the new oral history interviews I concluded that their objectivity would be maximised if they were recorded by a knowledgeable third party, rather than by me. All interviewees are people with whom I have, or have had, a professional relationship: former or current NFSA staff, council members or contractors, members of advocacy groups or stakeholders. My relationship with each of the individuals willing to be identified is set out in [Appendix 10](#). I believed that the interviewees would be less constrained in their comments with this approach, and, where necessary, would be afforded greater freedom to criticise me as well as others.

Though it may be stylistically unusual, parts of the narrative, in addition to the auto-ethnographical sections are written in the first person. Given my direct involvement in the sequence of historical events, to avoid doing this would have been awkward and artificial.

1.5 BACKGROUND ON AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES

LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS

The concepts of the *library* and the *archives*, not always distinct from each other, date back to around 2000 B C, while the modern *museum* began to emerge during the Renaissance. More recently the fields of information management and conservation science have come to complement the modern professions of archival science, librarianship and museum curatorship. While institutional libraries and museums were well established in the Australian colonies during the 19th century, with national counterparts to follow after Federation, public archives and the archival profession were not securely established in Australia, institutionally and legislatively, until the mid-20th century.

Globally, audiovisual archiving emerged slowly during the early 20th century, conceptually separated into the media-related fields of film, sound, radio, and television. Practitioners regarded themselves variously as archivists, librarians, curators – or none of these. The Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF), the first professional association of institutional film archives⁹, was established in 1938, followed decades later by the International Association of Sound Archives (IASA), the International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA), and others. As advancing technology, economics and practicality began to coalesce the separate media¹⁰ it was UNESCO that gave the field the collective identity of *audiovisual archiving* in the 1980s.

⁹ The generic term “film archive” was standardised not because of any resemblance to manuscript or document archives, but because it communicated an image of stability and altruism. Their concern with mass culture gave film archives a relatively weak position in the hierarchy of cultural institutions, where they were not at first recognised as being in the same league as libraries, museums and traditional archives. Penelope Houston, Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives (London: British Film Institute, 1994). Karen F. Gracy, Film Preservation : Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2007).

¹⁰ Film archives began collecting television and magnetic tape, radio and television overlapped into broadcasting, sound archives expanded into video. The International Association of Sound Archives (IASA) became the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives in 1995. And so on.

This was around the time of the NFSA's establishment, and the ending what some regard as the pioneering period of the profession.¹¹ UNESCO currently hosts the profession's peak forum, the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA)¹², and has established its annual promotional platform, the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage.

EPHEMERAL NOVELTY

At first broadly considered ephemeral novelties, even though the permanent cultural value of moving images and recorded sounds was apparent to some as early as 1898¹³, early attempts at preservation were haphazard, as librarians and curators tried to apply traditional concepts and methods to their management.¹⁴ It was perhaps the ultimate symbolic achievement of audiovisual archives to assert recognition of films and

¹¹ Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives*. It was not until 1972 that the International Council on Archives (ICA) took official recognition of moving images and sound recordings. Sam Kula, *Appraising Moving Images* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2003). In 1980, UNESCO's General Assembly adopted its *Recommendation for the safeguarding and preservation of moving images* which, inter alia, urges the universal application of legal deposit measures for moving images. Finally, IFLA adopted *Guidelines for audiovisual and multimedia materials in libraries and archives* in 2004 Gracy, *Film Preservation : Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice*.

¹² Members are AMIA, FIAF, FIAT, IASA, SEAPAVAA, ARSC, FOCAL, ICA, IFLA) www.ccaaa.org

¹³ Boleslaw Matuszewski, *A New Source of History/ Animated Photography: What It Is, What It Should Be* (Warsaw: FilMOTEKA Narodowa, 1999).

¹⁴ In the British Museum, for example: "The film was neither a print nor a book, nor – in fact, everybody could say what it was not; but nobody could say what it was. The scheme was not exactly pigeonholed. The real trouble was that nobody could say to which particular pigeonhole it belonged [*The Era*, 1896]" and again: "...the ordinary work of the print-room of the British Museum is quite disorganised by the collection of animated photographs that have been pouring in upon the bewildered officials...the degradation of the room consecrated to Durer, Rembrandt and the other masters...[in which the staff] unwillingly catalogue "the Prince's Derby", "The Beach at Brighton", "the buses of Whitehall", and the other attractive scenes than delight the great heart of the music-hall public....seriously, does not the collection of rubbish become a trifle absurd?" [*Westminster Gazette*, 1897].

Sound recordings fared no better. In the *London Evening News*, 22 March 1905, it was suggested that the British Museum should create a collection of sound recordings of poets, statesmen, preachers, orators and singers. Having repeatedly turned down donations, by as late as 1925 the Museum held just a few dozen recordings. They had accepted Melba and Chaliapin, Tolstoy and Ernest Shackleton, but turned down Bouchier and H B Irving – and even King George V. Timothy Day, "The National Sound Archive: The First Fifty Years," *Aural History*, ed. Andy Linehan (London: British Library, 2001).

Films were quickly associated with vulgar entertainment, the popular culture of the music halls and burlesque theatres. Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*. Until the 1940s the Library of Congress defined films as a series of still photographs Charles 'Buckey' Grimm, "A Paper Print Pre-History," *Film History* 11 (1999).

recordings holistically *in their own right, not as aspects of something else*, and to construct methods, rules and systems accordingly.¹⁵

Until the 1980s there was little professional literature specific to the field. The practicalities of moving image and audio preservation had to be discovered and developed from first principles.¹⁶ Today the literature is extensive and specialised and is theoretical as well as technical.¹⁷ Likewise, the field has developed its own codes of ethics.

The formative years of the audiovisual archiving movement were characterized by a sense of mission to save a fragile and vanishing heritage, and led by strong and committed individuals.¹⁸ These pioneering years were distinguished by the central concerns of preservation on the one hand, and managing relationships with a powerful and sometimes antagonistic production and distribution industry on the other, as well as asserting the permanent cultural value of media that could be dismissed as of interest “only to cranks”.¹⁹ An acute awareness of the huge quantities of ‘lost’ material, for which time frames and urgencies are of a different order than for traditional paper

¹⁵ Ray Edmondson, A Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving (Paris: UNESCO, 1998).

¹⁶ FIAF's modest handbook FIAF, Film Preservation (London: 1965). and Ralph N. Sargent, Preserving the Moving Image (Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Endowment for the Arts, 1974). were pioneering, revelatory publications concerned with the practical aspects of film duplication, restoration, and collection management. Regular professional journals commenced only in 1969: IASA's *Phonographic Bulletin* and, later, *FIAF's Journal of film preservation*.

¹⁷ For example Kevin Bradley, Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects (IASA, 2004), Giovanni Fossati, From Grain to Pixel : The Archival Life of Film in Transition (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009). Leo Enticknap, Moving Image Technology : From Zoetrope to Digital (London: Wallflower, 2005), Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Francis, Alexander Horwath and Michael Loebenstein, Film Curatorship (Vienna: Oesterreichisches Filmmuseum, 2008), Roger Smith and Catherine A. Surowiec, This Film Is Dangerous : A Celebration of Nitrate Film (Bruxelles: FIAF, 2002). Collection development presented its own problems since existing archival literature offered little practical guidance Kula, Appraising Moving Images.

¹⁸ Houston, Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives, Paolo Cherchi Usai, Burning Passions : An Introduction to the Study of Silent Cinema (London: British Film Institute, 1994), Grace Koch and Albrecht Haefner, "Forty Years of IASA - a Brief Introduction," IASA Conference (Athens: 2009), vol., Gracy, Film Preservation : Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice.

¹⁹ Houston, Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives.p 28

materials, pervades the field.²⁰ Yet even to recent writers, the audiovisual media are perceived to lack the scholarly validity of older media.

²⁰ Allen Eyles and David Meeker, Missing Believed Lost : The Great British Film Search (London: BFI Publishing, 1992), Nick Deocampo, Lost Films of Asia (Manila: Anvil, 2006), Ray Edmondson and Andrew Pike, Australia's Lost Films (National Library of Australia, 1982), Kevin Brownlow, The Parade's Gone By (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), Smither and Surowiec, This Film Is Dangerous : A Celebration of Nitrate Film.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 is introductory, setting out the purpose and significance of the study, and some background information on the NFSA, leading to the research question. The approach to the project, as a historical study with an interpretivist perspective, is then explained. The range and scope of evidence is detailed, with particular attention to the rationale, ethics and conduct of the oral history program. Finally, the historical derivation of the institutional concept of the “audiovisual archive” is summarised.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature. Given the breadth of the subject, the review has focussed on particular themes. The historical emergence of audiovisual archives, their ethos and organisational models and their professional disciplines is set against the larger field of memory institutions, internationally and within Australia. This leads to the phenomenon of organisational mergers and demergers in both commercial and non-commercial environments. Stakeholders, advocacy groups and ethical considerations have figured largely in the NFSA’s story and this theme opens with a discussion of how far advocacy arises from the practitioners – archivists and librarians – in view of their personality preferences. The role of management consultancy in the NFSA’s evolution invites a consideration of the consultancy profession and its pitfalls. Finally, the literature of marketing, positioning and branding is considered at length, with particular reference to the pros and cons of rebranding.

Chapter 3 is a chronological history of the NFSA’s emergence from 1935 to 2008, based on the documentary evidence. It falls naturally into six sections. The first, from 1935 to 1984, covers its years as part of the National Library, from its initial conception, through its gradual growth, to the final the tensions and controversy of its separation and reconstitution as an autonomous institution. The second section covers its transition to this new status, as the young institution takes shape. The third covers its growth into a substantial organisation, claiming its due place in the spectrum of collecting institutions.

The fourth focuses on the experience and consequences of its rebranding as ScreenSound Australia in 1999, and the fifth on its period as part of the Australian Film Commission. The final section documents its achievement of statutory authority status with the passage of the NFSA Act in 2008.

Chapter 4 is a distillation of the oral histories recorded as part of the project, comparing and contrasting recollections on particular topics or events. It follows the same chronology as Chapter 3, ending with general reflections on the institution, its rationale and the duty of care of governments and public servants.

Chapter 5 is an analysis and assessment of the evidence, bringing together the three streams covered in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Taking the research question as a point of departure, it arranges evidence around five key turning points in the NFSA's history: its emergence within NLA, separation from NLA, the rebranding, the merger with AFC and the final achievement of statutory status.

Chapter 6 arrives at conclusions, responding in turn to the four main parts of the research question. It goes on to consider the issue of duty of care, leading to final personal reflections arising from the journey travelled in the project. Areas for further research are suggested.

The **appendices** include a timeline, personal reflections from the beginning of the project, a tabulation of lost audiovisual heritage consequent to the circumstances of the NFSA's evolution, and supplementary reading.

The effective ones are the one-man shows. The institutional ones are disastrous. They waste time, cost money, demoralise and distract your best people, and don't solve problems. They are people who borrow your watch to tell you what time it is and then walk off with it.

Robert Townsend, former president and chairman of Avis Rent-a-Car, writing in 1970 on management consultants

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study traces a progression of historical events from 1935 to 2008, relating to the emergence and final legislative recognition of a national memory institution. This review identifies existing literature which frames the project. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the thesis draws heavily on published material which directly relates to NLA or NFSA. For the most part, this material is footnoted or quoted in the following chapters and is dealt with as it arises. It does not need repeating here.

Accordingly, the **History and profession** section which follows looks more holistically at literature relating to the operational context of the NFSA and the pressures impinging on it. This includes the global audiovisual archiving field, from which it has drawn its operational standards and reference points, and the libraries, archives and museums which are its professional peers, globally and within Australia.

The NFSA was profoundly affected by being demerged from the NLA and later merged, then demerged, from AFC. The **Evolution, mergers and demergers** section looks at literature on this phenomenon, as it has affected both commercial organisations and non-commercial institutions. Several case studies are noted.

At crucial points in its history, the NFSA's survival and advancement has depended on the actions of external stakeholders and advocacy groups. The section on **Stakeholders, advocates and ethics** considers the literature on this topic, and also looks at its relevance to practitioners *within* memory institutions. Personal preference studies indicate that librarians and archivists are themselves risk-averse and reluctant advocates for their work, and can find it difficult to balance professional obligations with those to their employer.

The advice of **Management consultants** has been integral to some of the most fateful choices made by the NLA and NFSA, and views about their competence, value and effectiveness vary considerably. Outcomes may depend on the honesty and effectiveness of the client-consultant relationship and the expectations created by a consultancy project. The literature includes commentary on government and private sector case studies.

Marketing, positioning and branding most profoundly influenced the NFSA in 1999 when its name was changed, and during its later incorporation into the AFC. The extensive literature of this field, covering both theory and practice, relates mostly to commercial organisations but the issues are now beginning to matter to non-commercial organisations as well.

2.2 HISTORY AND PROFESSION

EMERGENCE

Young man, our invention is not for sale, and besides it would ruin you. It may be exploited for a while as a scientific novelty, but apart from that it has no commercial future. (Louis Lumiere to Georges Méliès, 1895)²¹

Audiovisual archiving had no formal beginning. It emerged following the invention of sound recording and motion pictures, the permanent cultural or commercial value of which was not generally apparent to its inventors or exploiters, or to contemporary libraries, archives or educational bodies. (Day) There were some, however, who could see further and understood the need for preservation, despite an almost universal institutional disregard (Houston; Long and Long; Edmondson *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*; Matuzewski).

The earliest sound and film archives – not necessarily, at first, identified by that descriptor²² – had diverse origins and motivations and took a variety of organisational forms. They included stand-alone organisations, subsets of existing libraries, museums, or educational institutions. Some were state-funded, others private foundations, yet others a mixture of both.²³

²¹ Auguste and Louis Lumiere held the first public screenings of moving images in Paris in 1895, generally regarded as the birth of cinema as we now know it. Georges Méliès was one of its artistic pioneers. Joan Long and Martin Long, *The Pictures That Moved: A Picture History of the Australian Cinema 1896-1929* (Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1982). Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives*.

²² Penelope Houston considers “there was nothing that could be properly called an archive until the mid-1930s, and in the early days there might have been some hesitancy about what they should call themselves. Ernest Lindgren was curator of the National Film *Library* when in 1948 he wrote an article for the *Penguin Film Review*. ‘The word “archive” rings with a deathly sound in the world of cinema, which is so young and vital and dynamic, eager for the future and impatient of the past’, he wrote with a certain wistfulness. But eight years later.... the Library had become the National Film Archive...the word library suggests books; the film libraries so-called mostly exist for commercial purposes – stock shot, newsreel and so on. To maintain an often precarious and difficult relationship with the film industry, the archives had to demonstrate their distance from the profit motive....they chose a name which suggested solidity and safe-keeping.” pp2,3 Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives*.

²³ In other writings, for example Ray Edmondson, “A Case of Mistaken Identity: Governance, Guardianship and the ScreenSound Saga,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 30.1 (2002) and *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles* (Paris, UNESCO, 2004), I have discussed professional terminology and the nuanced use of the word ‘archive’ as an institutional identifier within the audiovisual archiving field. Its employment differs, for example, from

The imperatives for these new archives, which began to coalesce in the 1930s, included a sense of urgency over the continuing destruction of what were now commercially worthless silent films, a vision to utilise the educative potential of the new medium and establish its recognition as an art form, a desire to protect a national asset, and a need to devise methods and technologies to preserve apparently fragile and impermanent media.²⁴ Their proponents encountered the cultural prejudice and conservatism of existing collecting institutions, which discounted the significance of film and sound recordings because of their entertainment and commercial associations (LaPalombara). Perhaps worse, their prevailing mindsets could only perceive the audiovisual media as surrogate books, pictures or museum objects, which, try as they might, refused to fit into the rationales of traditional management and cataloguing systems.

These limitations were overlaid with the suspicions of producers, who jealously controlled their intellectual property in a manner antithetical to the principles of free access enshrined in the concept of public libraries and museums (Janis).²⁵ It all meant that a new kind of entity would have to do the job. (Frick; Slide). The emergence of the profession of audiovisual archiving would prove a long and painful process. Not until the 1980s would it begin to achieve its own university courses, the recognition of UNESCO and the professional associations of the other collecting fields. (Houston; UNESCO). Even now, there are those who contend that the audiovisual media lack the status of more traditional research sources and are discriminated against within the research community. (Jahnichen)²⁶

the use of the term in the Jenkinsonian tradition as expounded in Robert C Sharman, "Our National Heritage: The Australian Librarian's Commitment to its Preservation" pamphlet (c.1989).

²⁴ Ironically, Hitler's Reichsfilmarchiv, although it did not survive World War II, was an unlikely model for future bodies like the NFSA. A state institution established in 1935, it was envisaged as a storehouse of national cinema, and was securely funded and housed. "The Nazis understood the power and potential of film." Houston, Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives.

²⁵ Janis's theory of "groupthink" may seem some distance from the innate conservatism of cultural institutions and bureaucracies, but as will be seen, once particular cultural assumptions are embedded, policy outcomes are shaped by them.

²⁶ The definition of a 'profession' is not pursued here, but other writers - for example, see Andrew Abbott, The System of Professions (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1988)- have expounded on the topic. In my view, audiovisual archiving has now become an identifiable profession, as argued in Ray Edmondson, "Is Film Archiving a

Yet the post-war growth of FIAF members was relentless. By 1963, archives in a total of twenty four reporting countries held an aggregate 132,000 films (i.e. titles), 4.3 million photographic stills and 260,000 books. Film screenings attracted a total 3.6 million spectators. By 1969, staff numbers ranged from eleven in Canada up to thirty nine in the UK. By 1973 these numbers had grown by at least fifty per cent, and collections were two or three times larger than in 1963.²⁷ In 1969, sound archives also gained their own international organisation, IASA. (Koch and Haefner)

AUTONOMY AND IDENTITY

Compared with the generic image of national libraries, archives or museums, there is no such thing as a typical audiovisual archive. According to Houston “they vary too much in their origins, scale, structures, funding and state of development. Many archives exist independently, but many do not [and] are bound to take some institutional tone from [their] surroundings”. The “surroundings” now include commercial organisations, since in recent decades radio, television and film producers have recognised the value of preserving their backlog. From the beginning it was their shared needs – in, for example, preservation practice, dealing with production industries, collection management and providing access - which brought them together, first in FIAF, later IASA, FIAT, Association of Moving Image Archives (AMIA) and South East Asia Pacific AudioVisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA), and catered to their distinctives. While the descriptor ‘archive’ defined a collective professional identity, it would not always be

Profession?” Film History: an international journal 7/3 (1995) and is recognised as “an emerging and evolving discipline in its own right” by the Australian Society of Archivists, Keeping Archives, 3rd ed. (2008).

²⁷ The sources for statistics of each of these three years are different groups of archives, but they give a general indication of accelerating international growth, even allowing for the inherent vagaries of such figures. No comparable figures for sound archives are available. FIAF, “FIAF Yearbook 1964,” (Paris: FIAF, 1964), vol. Ray Edmondson, A Study Tour of Film Archives in England, Europe and the U.S.A. (Australian Film and Television School, 1974). Roderick John Wallace, “The Film Division - Past, Present and Future,” (National Library of Australia, 1970), vol.

part of their individual 'brand': terms like discoteca, cinemathèque, and phonogrammarchiv might be locally preferred.²⁸

While film, sound and television archives originally emerged as separate concepts, both the march of technology and strategic necessity has inexorably brought them together. UNESCO coined the umbrella professional descriptor of audiovisual archiving and the CCAAA meets under its auspices, while many archives have followed the NFSA by expanding to embrace the entire audiovisual spectrum rather than a specific part of it. Not that the adjustment comes easily: "the notion of drawing everything together [in the NFSA], in one sprawling whole, must involve differences not merely of technology but of selection standards and disciplines." (Houston)

Autonomy became a requirement for FIAF membership and, as their constitutions show, it is implicitly prized by the other associations. If it does not always indicate a stand-alone organisation, it does imply *professional and operational* autonomy embracing stability, continuity, identity, expertise, an ethical code and the freedom to pursue policies which may be differentiated from those of the parent body.²⁹

HISTORIES AND SURVEYS

The field has been strengthened in recent years by the appearance of substantial corporate histories which explicate the values and identities of individual audiovisual archives. The stories of major archives in Latin America (Souza; Rodriguez; Costa) and Europe (Santamarina; Mannoni; Day; Butler) provide some comparisons with the NFSA, though operating in totally different environments and often with different purposes. For example, the central and sometimes elitist focus on cinema as art form (Francis) was long a touchstone of FIAF, though such a narrow view would never be sufficient for a national audiovisual archive in Australia.

²⁸ Ray Edmondson, *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles* (Paris: UNESCO, 2004). Perhaps the most emotive national title is the Maori identity for the New Zealand Film Archive: *Kaitiaki o Nga Taonga Whitiāhua* (literally "guardians of the treasures of light")

²⁹ FIAF, "Statement on the Role of Film Archives," (1981), vol, FIAF, "Code of Ethics," ed. FIAF International Federation of Film Archives (1998), vol, Day, "The National Sound Archive: The First Fifty Years."

In its pioneering decades, dominant and visionary personalities established the character and trajectory of the movement from the 1930s onward. Quiet and reserved, the British National Film Archive's Ernest Lindgren (Francis) contrasted with the flamboyant, larger-than-life Henri Langlois of the Cinemathèque Française (Roud). Philosophical and temperamental opposites, Langlois favoured public screenings while Lindgren focussed on the practicalities of preservation and organisation building. Poland's Jerzy Toeplitz (Klaue) was the astute diplomat who led the growth of FIAF through the early decades of the cold war. Iris Barry and Eileen Bowser of New York's Museum of Modern Art (Wasson; Dimitriu) encouraged public recognition of the art of the cinema. In the wake of the British Museum's continuing disregard of sound recordings, Patrick Saul's persistence established the British Institute of Recorded Sound, later the National Sound Archive. (Day)³⁰

Offering a wider perspective are surveys of archiving at the national level, such as in Italy (Frappat) or the USA (Frick; Slide), or regionally in Europe (Borde) or globally.³¹ While they tend to favour collection development and technical issues as much as corporate history, politics and strategic observation, it is noticeable that for most writers, Australia is hardly on the map – whether because of their predisposition or the lack of available information.

³⁰ In her analysis of Sir Redmond Barry's central role in the history of Victoria's Supreme Court Library, Sue Reynolds discusses the 'great man' theory of institutional growth. Sue Reynolds, "The Establishment of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria, 1851-1884: Antecedents, Foundation and Legacy", Charles Sturt University, 2008. Like Barry, these were towering personalities who bequeathed a professional legacy to their successors.

³¹ There are many surveys and viewpoints, such as Raymond Borde and Freddy Buache, *La Crise De Cinematheques Et Du Monde* (Paris: Editions de L'Age d'Homme, 1997), Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives*. FIAF, *50 Years of Film Archives* (Brussels: International Federation of Film Archives, 1998), Koch and Haefner, "Forty Years of IASA - a Brief Introduction," vol. Sam Kula, "Film Archives at the Centenary of Film," *Archivaria - the Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists*.40 (1995).

PHILOSOPHICAL AND MOTIVATIONAL

There is a wider realm of literature, which goes beyond the purely practical and, on the one hand, highlights the fascinations and sentiments that drive audiovisual archivists, while on the other delves into the philosophical fundamentals and realities of the field. Of the former, the work of Kevin Brownlow and Paolo Cherchi Usai³² has conveyed to generations of archivists a passion for silent film, Leo Enticknap has elucidated the history of film technology (Enticknap) and Smither the fascination with nitrate film stock (Smither and Surowiec). Of the latter, the dynamics of collecting, philosophy of preservation and digitisation³³ add to the pioneering work of Ralph Sargent (Sargent). Nor would one exclude works of fiction, such as Auster's novel about lost films, arising from these (Auster). Such work has impinged on the NFSA indirectly, but along with the journals of professional societies such as IASA, FIAF, SEAPAVAA, ASRA and AMIA this steadily expanding literature has provided the professional backdrop to the NFSA's work.

In Australia, and beginning with Anthony Buckley's film compilation *Forgotten Cinema* in 1966, almost all the books, films and programs which explored aspects of Australia's audiovisual history were either made in collaboration with NFA, SR or NFSA or leaned heavily on its collection and staff³⁴. Pike and Cooper is regarded as the authoritative reference work on feature films. Baxter and Reade were earlier, more populist writers while Shirley and Adams cast their net over the wider industry. Bridges and Kent took

³² Cherchi Usai, Burning Passions : An Introduction to the Study of Silent Cinema. Cherchi Usai served as NFSA Director from 2004 to 2008. Also Brownlow, The Parade's Gone By.

³³ In addition to my own writings, there are many others: Fossati, From Grain to Pixel : The Archival Life of Film in Transition, Gracy, Film Preservation : Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice, Julia Noordegraaf, "Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Visual Culture," Erasmus University, 2004, Cherchi Usai, Francis, Horwath and Loebenstein, Film Curatorship. Michael Loebenstein is the current CEO of the NFSA.

³⁴ Andrew Pike and Ross Cooper, Australian Film, 1900-1977 : A Guide to Feature Film Production, Rev. ed. ed. (Melbourne ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Graham Shirley and Brian Adams, Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years (Angus and Robertson, in association with Currency Press, 1983), John Baxter, The Australian Cinema (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1970). Eric Reade, Australia's Silent Films (Lansdowne Press, 1970), Nancye Bridges, Wonderful Wireless (Sydney: Methuen Australia, 1983), Jacqueline Kent, Out of the Bakelite Box (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1983)..

an in depth look at radio. Some books paid Australia a compliment, when overseas activities were inspired by NFA's *Last Film Search*. (Eyles and Meeker)

MEMORY INSTITUTIONS – THE WIDER FIELD

In the wider field of memory institutions, that is, libraries, archives, museums and galleries, there is a substantial literature which ranges over conservation, collection development, ethics and philosophy, access services and other specialist topics. Historical surveys take many forms, from the general to the specific. They include, for example, corporate histories of famous institutions such as the British Museum (Wilson), the British Public Record Office (Cantwell), the Smithsonian Institute (Burleigh), The Library of Congress (Mearns; Cole), the Musée du Louvre (McLellan) or the Bodleian Library (Craster). Some of these, such as the history of the Library of Congress, on which the early CNL modelled itself, and which now contains a substantial audiovisual division³⁵, do overlap with the audiovisual archiving field and illustrate the shared fundamental ethical and conservation values.

Focussing on Australia, there are corporate histories for many of Australia's major memory institutions, such as Sydney's Mitchell Library (Fletcher), the Victorian and South Australian state libraries (Buttrose; Bridge; McMullin; McVilly), the state museums of Victoria (Rasmussen), New South Wales (Strahan and Brannigan), South Australia (Hale) and Queensland (Mather and Agnew), as well as the CSIRO/ANIC (Upton) and Australian War Memorial (McKernan) in Canberra. These vary in character, but many have a strong emphasis on collection development and physical accommodation, as well as events and personalities.

³⁵ Motion picture, broadcasting and recorded sound division, with which the NFSA and NFA have had a long relationship. It has achieved a geographic, rather than organisational, separation from the parent organisation and its existence is predicated on the character of US copyright law, which made recognition of copyright in any work contingent on the registration and deposit of a copy of that work with the Library. Australian copyright law (like most other countries) has a different basis which involves neither deposit nor registration.

Of perhaps more relevance to this study was the story of the Archives of Australian Business and Labour at the Australian National University (Maidment) which, through stakeholder action, survived the threats of takeover (by the NLA) and, later, closure (by the University). The Percy Grainger Museum is a pertinent example of a sound-oriented museum (Nemec) as well as an example of the 'great man' institution. Grainger's recordings are, incidentally, held by the NFSA. Museum Victoria's history embraces the realities of mergers devised by politicians and bureaucrats who do not have to deal with the outcomes of their decisions (Rasmussen). Reynolds' history of the Victorian Supreme Court Library is heavily based, like this study, on an analysis of internal and unpublished documentation (Reynolds). Jennifer Craik examines the history of arts policy in Australia and concludes, inter alia, that governments tend to support traditional, elite and non-popular forms of culture rather than 'popular' culture, which would characterise the audiovisual media and its preservation. (Craik)

NATIONAL LIBRARY AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Historically, the two institutions with the closest relationship to the NFSA are the National Archives of Australia (NAA) and the National Library of Australia (NLA), since all three derive from the same progenitor. NAA's website offers a palette of substantial documents tracing its corporate history (Parker; Piggott "The Visit of Dr T R Schellenberg to Australia") while a wider literature traces its professional emergence (Piggott and McKemmish; Piggott "Library Control of Archives; Golder), although no writings seem to address the still unclear division of audiovisual activities between NAA and NFSA.

The NLA's story, from 1901 onwards, is an eventful one. The sources are multifarious: some oral histories with key staff members, collection-oriented publications (Burmester *Guide to the Collections*; Thompson *The Peoples' Treasures*; Cochrane), the writings of

heads of the NLA, such as Harrison Bryan and Harold White³⁶, miscellaneous papers, monographs, overviews of Australian libraries (Kenny; Biskup *Library Models and Myths*; Biskup and Henty; Whyte and Radford), accounts of the earliest years (Osborn and Osborn; Balnaves and Biskup; Biskup and Goodman) and the papers presented at successive conferences on Australian library history. What seems to be missing is a bringing together of this mass of material to bring it into a cohesive or critical corporate history.

In the lists of papers and presentations by NLA staff members, as set out in NLA annual reports for the decade up to 1984, film and sound activities are below the radar. They are rarely mentioned except in occasional papers or articles by actual film or sound staff members, which dwell on collection or technical issues. This lack of interest in the audiovisual media in its own right, in the context of traditional print media, is broadly evident in the output of senior figures associated with the NLA. It was apparently not part of their thinking, although the loss of the film and sound areas in 1984 was strongly resisted and resented, as will become clear in Chapter 3.

A contrast to these voices is Rod Wallace, who led and quietly championed the film and sound areas, and Larry Lake, whose interview is characterised by his delight in a specific Australian motion picture. (Wallace *Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup*; Lake). Wallace and Lake were at the middle level of the NLA hierarchy. Unfortunately many of these NLA oral histories are their own commentary on the institution's contemporary attitude to the audiovisual media: they are ill-prepared and loosely conducted. For example, Harrison Bryan's lengthy recording contains numerous factual errors³⁷; he is clearly speaking off the cuff, without reference to documents, though his

³⁶ White wrote on documentary film as an adjunct to books Harold L White, "Documentary Films and Other New Materials in Library Service," (1946), vol. while Bryan was a prolific writer on library topics. A pertinent extract from his memoirs, *No gray profession*, is at [Appendix 7](#)

³⁷ Recorded in 1989, five years after NFSA left the NLA, Bryan remembers NFA Advisory Committee chair Phil Budden as "Jim Budden." He asserts that the name of Hazel Hawke, wife of the Prime Minister, was used "very vigorously" by proponents for the independence of the NFA: one would expect contextual confirmation of this to exist but none has been found. He states that the NLA Council's confidential advice to Minister Barry Cohen on the

interviewer is well researched and familiar with Australian library history. In contrast, Rod Wallace obviously prepared carefully, and although his memories are occasionally inconsistent, his comments are concise and well constructed.³⁸

NFSA CONSTITUENCY

From 1988 to 2001, the NFSA's annual reviews likewise list papers and presentations by staff. More numerous than in NLA days, they still major on collections and associated scholarship, technical issues, and discussion on professional topics like cataloguing. There is little corporate history or professional philosophy. The journal of the Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA) fares a little better, with occasional pieces on Australia's place in the international spectrum of sound archiving (Koch) and citing the problems of joining audio and visual archiving. (McCarthy). Even in the corporate histories of bodies whose stories are intertwined with the growing NFSA, such as the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), Sydney Film Festival (SFF) and the Australian Film Institute (AFI), one searches in vain for more than a passing mention of the NFSA (French and Poole; Urban; Webber).

The NFSA's *Annual Report 2008-09*, its first as a statutory authority, was designed as a landmark document and contains a potted, though homogenised, history of the NFSA. The 1985 NFSA vision report *Time in our hands (TIOH)* (National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee) contained an even briefer, if more accurate, retrospection. There have been other writings about the NFSA (Kaufman; Bertrand) as well as many articles by this author, some listed in the bibliography, but nothing approaching a comprehensive history of the NFSA has so far been written. An oral history covering

separation of the NFA was never published: in fact, it was printed as an appendix in the NLA's 1983-84 Annual Report. These are a few of many instances.

³⁸ Bryan, Wallace and many others were interviewed by Peter Biskup, an academic who was publicly fiercely critical of the NLA at the time of NFSA's departure in 1984. He seemed particularly interested in probing the 'skulduggery' surrounding the NFSA's departure with his subjects. There may have been a personal agenda, and in his recording with Bryan he engages in some self-justification of his past criticism.

Archive Forum (AF) and Friends of the NFSA (FNFSA) activism during the NFSA's AFC period was made in late 2008 as a matter of record. (Puplick, Pike and Edmondson)

CONCLUSION

While much of the literature pertaining to the relatively young field of audiovisual archives, and the older and broader field of memory institutions, provides general context rather than directly elucidating to the research question, it tends to affirm the value of adding a history of the NFSA to the range of global literature, where reference to Australia is largely absent. It also tends to affirm that NFSA's experience has unique characteristics which will usefully expand global knowledge by being documented.

Corporate history generally receives scant attention on the websites of Australian memory institutions: a better source is Wikipedia.³⁹ Some of the histories are official - that is, published by the institutions themselves. Others, like this thesis, are written by former staff members.

³⁹ In a random survey of twelve major institutional websites on 5 July 2011, four made no mention of their corporate history, while only one, NAA, offered a substantial corporate history on line. The NLA offered a pictorial timeline and referred to a purchasable selective history of the collections. The remainder offered potted histories that occupied only one or two web pages. The institutions surveyed were the NLA, NAA, NFSA, NGA, NMA, National Gallery of Victoria, NSW Art Gallery, Australian Museum, Public Records Office of Victoria, New Zealand National Library, and the state libraries of Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania.

2.3 EVOLUTION, MERGERS AND DEMERGERS

Cultural institutions may be created as entirely new concepts, without antecedents (Maidment; Butler; Nemec; Urban). They can evolve from an antecedent body or bodies, a concept, formal enquiry or activity (Pigott) or be created by the partition or demerging of an existing organisation (Paton). They can arise from an existing body within which a unit has developed its own culture (Kozak; Townsend) if its people are motivated by ego and development needs, or seek to attain their goals or ideals rationally to serve the public interest. New bodies tend to be led by “zealots” who must build political support, pass a survival threshold, demonstrate the necessity of the body’s existence and remove threats to its identity (Puplick; Downs). Many early film and sound archives were established by what Downs defines as “zealots”, not all of whom were necessarily good “clock builders” (Collins and Porras) or, in other words, creators of sustainable organisations (Day; Roud). Accountability to a wide spectrum of individuals and organisations is a fact of life in the public and political sphere. The resulting inertia works against change, and creating a new organisation can be preferable for seeking new goals, rather than trying to do so through an existing system. (LaPalombara)

Equally, institutions evolve through mergers: by absorption into another body, losing its identity in the process, by amalgamation, when a new entity is created by the fusion of two or more predecessors, by acquisition, where one entity acquires effective control over another without such fusion, and by takeover, which may be either a consensual or hostile acquisition. Several of Australia’s national memory institutions have arrived at their current form through merger or demerger, and from their available history it seems this is a common experience for the major state-based institutions. There is no reason to assume that this dynamic will not continue. (Rasmussen; Bridge)

The dynamic is also observable overseas. In the 1970s its famous library was demerged from the British Museum and merged with two other entities to create the present British Library, a separate statutory body which later also absorbed the National Sound Archive (Wilson; Day). In 2004 the National Library and National Archives of Canada were merged (Doucet), and in New Zealand the National Archives and National Library were first demerged from the Department of Internal Affairs in 2000, then remerged in the Department in 2010 (Newman). In 1989 the newly established National Library of Norway took over certain functions from other institutions, and in 2010 the venerable Netherlands Filmmuseum was merged with three other film-related bodies to create the Eye Film Institute Netherlands (Hamer). All these actions were controversial to varying degrees, and while the ostensible reasons – for example, “to create a new kind of institution” “to future-proof” and the currently fashionable arguments about digital strategies - may or may not have been valid or professionally defensible, critics saw political, empire-building, trophy-winning or budget-reduction objectives in the decisions, which were sometimes associated with the suppression of public comment and evaluation.⁴⁰

Cultural or memory institutions can be defined as “durable, stable formations...to regulate the diffusion of knowledge, acting as a gatekeeping mechanism for access to information as it exists in tangible forms” (Gracy). Organisational stability and continuity is a fundamental aspect of archival preservation and therefore an implied ethical obligation, and those responsible need to be good “clock builders” to create enduring models which outlive their founding leadership, and have sustainable identities and purposes. (Stanford; Pfarrer et al.; Collins and Porras).

⁴⁰ The New Zealand amalgamations seem ominously similar to the AFC takeover of the NFSA, discussed in Chapter 3. Once the amalgamations were put in place, critical comment from professional associations ARANZ and LIANZA ceased and a steady erosion of identity began. As of late 2011, all email addresses have been standardised (ending in dia.nz – Department of Internal Affairs), the Department’s brand is the most prominent feature on Powerpoint presentations, and telephones are answered with a standard corporate greeting (eg) “Department of Internal Affairs, Archives New Zealand”. All staff are forbidden to make any public comment on the merger.

In the Australian public sector, outside such fixed points as Defence, Treasury and Foreign Affairs and Trade, portfolio departments are regularly dismantled, rearranged and renamed to match shifting political imperatives and fashions. Memory institutions have new departmental “owners” every few years. Policy decisions also result in new agencies. For example, Centrelink, created in 1997 as a huge, autonomous one-stop-shop service delivery agency, replaced the social service and employment segments of traditional policy departments (Halligan).⁴¹ Much earlier, the National Library Enquiry Committee 1956-57 (Paton) saw the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library (CPL), Commonwealth Archives Office (CAO) and NLA emerge from a single progenitor. In 2006, a similar exercise in Norway brought together the government employment (DOL) and insurance (NIS) services to make a new entity, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV). DOL was opposed to the merger. The device used was to create NAV Interim as a separate organisation which gradually took over the functions of DOL and NIS. The dynamics, still ongoing at the time of writing, reflected DOL’s continuing fears and reluctance. (Halligan; Askim et al.)

How well do mergers work? In the commercial world, studies suggest that the failure rate – that is, failure to achieve the claimed synergies or enhanced value – is up to eighty per cent, and that up to seventy per cent of mergers actually diminish shareholder value.⁴² Among the reasons cited are failures in due diligence, mismatch in size between acquirer and target, poor strategic and organisational fit, loss of knowledge as staff depart, empire building and expansion for its own sake, and poorly managed integration. Sometimes the acquisition or merger is simply motivated by schemes designed to enrich management at the stakeholders’ expense. (Spiers; Virani; Thomas; Stanford; Kotter)

⁴¹ It was represented as a new entity, not a takeover or absorption, directed to create a service culture and to interact with private service providers. A deliberate approach to culture change flattened structures and avoided traditional public service titles and designations. Later, as the political environment changed, it lost its autonomy and began to revert to traditional departmental norms.

⁴² Some spectacular failures were cited: Quaker Oats/ Snapple Beverage (1994), Daimler Benz/Chrysler (1998), AOL/Time Warner (2000)

Yet even when approached on the basis of a valid and well prepared business case, and despite a wealth of research on the subject, it seems that due diligence rarely includes an assessment of cultural fit or social consequences. Trying to consolidate two organisations that have no shared history, systems of meaning, experiences, working patterns, values and so on creates personal threats by disrupting long standing patterns. Even when those affected have given intellectual assent to the merger, it may not translate into practical adjustment; in hostile takeovers, assent is not sought anyway (Accenture; Dayaram; Ren). There are strategies for cultural due diligence both before and after the merger, and for managing cultural change. A climate of “learning from each other” helps. Organisational culture is expressed in such diverse ways as operating styles, open or closed offices, informal or formal dress and behaviour, and marketplace reputation. Since there is rarely a true merger of equals, employees of the lesser partner are likely to be suspicious and fearful (Spiers; Stanford; Thomas).

Kraft’s hostile and highly leveraged takeover of the 186-year-old Cadbury company in 2010, resulting in loss of corporate memory, redundancies and doubts about cultural compatibility, received a bad press (Madden). The case study of an apparently rational merger between two US banks (staff sizes 275 and 325) is also illustrative of the difference between intellectual assent and hard reality (Buono, Bowditch and Lewis).⁴³

For government institutions, change is usually decreed from the top for policy reasons, which may make no allowances for the cultural and social dimensions. The present Museum Victoria is the product of a complex history of name changes, mergers and demergers over some 150 years. Most recently, the 1983 merger of the National Museum of Victoria and the Science Museum was decreed by Government, despite the serious reservations of both institutions. Unresolved issues and dissonant cultures persisted for

⁴³ The banks were not competitors, had similar goals and the merger envisaged a stronger and more competitive institution. The identity of the smaller bank was applied to the merged entity, but with a new logo. Before the merger, there was organised staff consultation: no concerns of substance emerged. Yet *after* the merger, the cultures clashed. There were feelings of hostility towards the “enemy”, members felt betrayed by their leaders, staff of both cited loss of family atmosphere, freedom, camaraderie and accessibility to management. Conclusion: there is a limit to the amount of imposed change people can assimilate in practice, even if they intellectually assented.

years. In 1985 the Museum's Council reported that "almost none of the perceived benefits of [the merger] had been realised." (Rasmussen)

CONCLUSION

In the commercial world, most mergers fail: cultures do not mesh and expected synergies are elusive. "Cultural due diligence" is rarely done beforehand, and by definition is antithetical to hostile takeovers. Many of Australia's national memory institutions are the product of mergers and demergers. Such transitions need valid reasons, not public relations spin. Where there is no shared history and values, mergers become personally threatening, and unresolved issues persist. Archives need to be stable and enduring bodies which outlive their creators.

2.4 STAKEHOLDERS, ADVOCACY AND ETHICS

In a press article published in November 1983, at the height of the public debate about the future of NFA and SR, a journalist who had recently left the employ of the NLA wrote in the *Canberra Times*:

Most librarians are not political animals. When danger threatens they hope against hope it will go away. If the danger comes from within they are hurt and with a misplaced sense of propriety are reluctant to act against their own (Cannon)

The traditional image of the timid and spinsterish librarian has been well researched as a stereotype in films. While reality is more nuanced, the stereotype is not without foundation (J. Williamson; Snoek-Brown; Acerro). Data collected from the 1970s onward seemed to confirm that “librarians are process-driven, short sighted and tend to shy away from any type of confrontation”. They also had a low self-image (Scherdin and Beaubien; Walters; Harrison).

Studies on the types of personalities working in the library and archives field have used personality type inventories such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the Strong Interest Inventory and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter. The Scherdin study in 1992 produced a more complex picture than the stereotype, while nevertheless finding that librarians measure twice as high on the “introversion” and “intuition” scales compared to the general population. They are also among the best educated – but lowest paid. The profession needs a spread of personality types to survive, and needs to take the initiative to improve its profile and image (Scherdin and Beaubien).⁴⁴

The picture seems similar for archivists. Studies carried out in 1998 in Australia, USA and Canada using the Keirsey Temperament Sorter show that archivists

⁴⁴ For the record, the writer is an INTJ according to the MBTI.

overwhelmingly fall into the 'guardians' category, almost twice the normal percentage in the Australian and Canadian populations. Guardians, as opposed to artisans, idealists and rationals, are dependable, methodical managers of goods and services, and reliable back-room people. But they resist change, are poor advocates for their own cause, and fail to obtain the resources and status needed for their work (Pederson). Specifically, the Canadian survey found archivists scored three times lower than the general population on the 'advocacy' scale. So if the archivists and librarians are unwilling, who are the other 'stakeholders' who will be the advocates for memory institutions in a tough and competitive political environment? (B. L. Craig)

The term 'stakeholder' was coined at Stanford Research Institute in 1963, defined as "those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist" and later redefined in 1984 by R E Freeman, the acknowledged founder of stakeholder theory, as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Freeman and Reed; Orts and Strudler; Fontaine, Haarman and Schmid). There have been many subsequent variations proposed in the considerable literature of the field, most of it applying to commercial corporations. There is relatively little relating to non-profits, a category which includes memory institutions, although in more recent times it has been acknowledged that the theory applies just as logically to them. The violence prevention group VIP, protesters targeting the ethics of corporates such as Shell, Nike and McDonalds, and environmental activist Greenpeace are case studies in point. Nor are stakeholders necessarily defined from the perspective of the organisations to which they relate. They may be legitimately defined from their own perspective, whether the organisation recognises this or not (Friedman and Miles; Barrett; Donaldson and Preston; Klein).

The dynamics of the organisation/stakeholder relationship may be supportive or adversarial, dependent or independent - or possibly all of these things at once - but it is a wise organisation whose governing body discerns, understands and manages these dynamics (Rosario and Goh; Friedman and Miles; Bourne; Davies et al.).

If this task of stakeholder management is done properly, much of the air is let out of critics who argue that the corporation must be democratised in terms of increased direct citizen participation..... No longer can public affairs, public relations, and corporate philanthropy serve as adequate management tools....Stakeholder management applies not only to the typical “us against them” confrontation with labour and environmentalists but to the cases where it is much harder to see “us” and “them”. (Freeman and Reed)

In relation to public cultural institutions, stakeholders may include the users of services, the suppliers of collection material, government, media, professional associations and advocates championing philosophical or public policy issues. They may also include staff, volunteers and advisers, commentators, professional bodies and associations, and even global bodies like UNESCO which set international standards and reference points within the cultural arena.⁴⁵ (Biskup "Fierce Wrangle over Movie Treasure Trove; Australian Library History Forum; Mulvaney; Buttrose; Waterford; Archive Forum "A Time for Review")

Many cultural institutions have ‘friends of’ or similar bodies which can focus and galvanise stakeholder opinion and serve as advocates or lobbyists. Cases in point are the Friends of the National Museum of Australia (NMA), which recruited a circle of prominent Australians who successfully lobbied the Government to properly fund the institution and construct its building, finally opened in 2001,⁴⁶ and the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives, who were successful in averting the archives’ proposed closure in 1997.⁴⁷ Campaigns by advocacy groups to establish, and later save, the NFSA are dealt

⁴⁵ UNESCO has a mechanism for formally recognising and consulting with international NGOs (non-government organisations) which includes the various professional associations within the library, archives, museum and audiovisual archiving fields. Its relevant conventions, recommendations and programs (such as the *Memory of the World* program – in which the writer currently holds committee positions) are an expression of these relationships.

⁴⁶ The Friends of the National Museum was formed in 1989 following a Government decision to defer consideration of the Museum for five years. It was led by the wives of two government ministers intent on neutralising the economic rationalist agenda of a Minister of Finance who wanted to abolish the Museum (“I [could] understand...where he was coming from, but we were fighting for another thing, which was our identity as a nation”). Julie Duncan and Tom Campbell, “[Interview with Julie Duncan],” (North Adelaide: 1999). Anonymous, “The Birth of the Friends of the National Museum - the Screaming Baby’s First Year,” Friends of the National Museum 10.2 (1999).

⁴⁷ This intention precipitated the formation of a Friends organisation. A four year campaign, backed by the Australian Society of Archivists, the NLA and NAA, to reverse this decision was ultimately successful. Barry Howarth and Ewan Maidment, ed., Light from the Tunnel, (Canberra: Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, 2004). pp137-152

with in later chapters. In contrast, the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery, which opened its building in 2009, had a 'dream run' politically due to sustained advocacy of well-connected arts patrons; no 'friends' lobbying was required. Lobbying does involve skills and strategies, and can also extract a price. (Puplick; Thompson "At the National Portrait Gallery: Art or History?"; Shirley; Watts; Edmondson "When Governments Make Mistakes; Jay, Scarfe and Williams).

Advocacy nevertheless may pose an ethical challenge to the employee and practitioner within memory institutions:

I felt some of the staff were incredibly nervous, because they felt we were doing the job they should be doing, but they knew they weren't allowed to be doing it....the really brave staff in there were delighted because they wanted to be saying everything we were saying. They would come to me and say "this is the problem. We have got to do this, that and the other. You can do it, we can't" (Duncan and Campbell).

It is a complex area which involves both individual and corporate actions that are situation and country-specific. Some issues, such as conflict of interest, are not as simple as they seem at first (Townsend). While there are numerous professional codes of ethics (FIAF Code of Ethics; Ferguson et al.) these do not cover complex or politically-charged situations where on-balance judgments have to be made. Case studies can be helpful (Benedict; Procter, Cook and Williams) but recognise that individual stances on principle can be costly (Martin).

Individuals may find that they have multiple and conflicting loyalties. Some consider loyalty to the employing institution as the paramount value (Borchardt; Bryan *No Gray Profession*) although Borchardt considers "as long as an employer is granted the power to dictate professional performance, this question remains an unsolved issue". Others cite loyalty to a profession (Whyte). But if the employing institution is part of a larger entity, such as the Australian Public Service, a dilemma can arise (Godwin). There may be times when an employer should be deceived or disobeyed if larger issues are at stake (Buckley *Behind a Velvet Light Trap*; Thornley et al.). Professionals must take final

responsibility for their actions; blind loyalty to a system should not absolve an individual from questioning its fundamental assumptions, nor acquiescing in instructions which breach a principle or a convention (Colliver; Banks; Wilenski).

CONCLUSION

External advocacy has been crucial to NFSA survival and growth, but activity by the archivists themselves has been minimal. Personal preference studies show that archivists and librarians are reluctant advocates, uncomfortable with opposing bureaucratic or political authority even if professional standards are at stake. There is some statistical basis for the cliché of the timid, conflict averse, bookish, introvert archivist or librarian. External stakeholders are needed to pursue causes. Stakeholder theory is a relatively new discipline, but applicable to non-profit institutions. Advocacy groups are a fact of life and a wise organisation understands and manages the dynamics.

2.5 USE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

The field of management consultancy has developed rapidly over the last twenty years (Clark and Fincham) and the literature is very large. There is no attempt here to canvass the topic widely and thoroughly. Rather, a selection from the literature has been made that is relevant to the specific environment and issues of memory institutions dealt with in this thesis.

Consultants are individuals or companies that are hired to work on projects that are outside 'business as usual' for their clients.⁴⁸ Opinions are divided: to some, consultants are charismatic 'gurus', to others they are "traders in trouble and agents of anxiety" (Tonnesen). Nor is the field easy to define. While there are international consultants' associations, the field's claim to professional status is disputed on the basis that there are no agreed standards or regulations, nor a defining body of knowledge. Others, however, see a de facto professional community with entry requirements, exit procedures and credentialing – albeit that entry barriers are low, turnover high and the very term 'consultant' can be a pejorative (Peirano-Vejo and Stablein). Large, long established international firms like McKinsey, Deloitte and Booz Allen Hamilton have the credibility of their own reputations. Consultants share knowledge - but for a price, unlike academics, who freely share (Peirano-Vejo).

At the most fundamental level, consultants provide information and diagnosis, and recommend action. At a more debatable level, they implement changes and build

⁴⁸ Werr quotes this "scientific" definition of consultants developed by Kyro in 1995: "In the process of management consulting, the consultant helps the organisation to solve its problems. The process is future oriented, intentional, and conscious on the part of both consultant and client. It is a change process with the need to succeed, collective by nature, and conducted in the interaction process between consultant and client using a diverse, integrative scientific knowledge base. Knowledge is needed both about the past and about the future to build up the new reality." Andreas Werr, "The Language of Change: The Roles of Methods in the Work of Management Consultants," Stockholm School of Economics, 1999.

associated consensus and commitment. In practice, the data provided may be impractical and the implementation poor. To quote Townsend:

The effective ones are the one-man shows. The institutional ones are disastrous. They waste time, cost money, demoralise and distract your best people, and don't solve problems. They are people who borrow your watch to tell you what time it is and then walk off with it. Don't use them under any circumstances (Townsend).

His view may have become a cliché, but it is widely shared in the literature, including by former consultants who cite apparently out-of-control spending with little to show for it, or recommendations that prove disastrous for the commissioning organisations. Work is carried out by sometimes profoundly unqualified people. Advice comes replete with buzzwords, management jargon and euphemisms ("there were no layoffs – just bar-raising in the regular appraisal process"). There are many writers who reinforce this negative view. (Turner; D. Craig; Watson; Kihn). Consultants have been regularly used by APS organisations including NLA, NFSA, AFC and their overarching portfolio department, sometimes at pivotal points in the NFSA's history, where they have been significant players in the unfolding events.

Whatever their individual capacities, consultants can be misused: for example, when the client wants a potential scapegoat, or wants the consultant to endorse a predetermined decision, or as a means of prevarication or, again, as an ego-boosting appendage to a senior executive (Altman; Hari; Heller). Yet, realistically, a consultant cannot submit a report, however honest, which incenses a customer. It will not be accepted, and it will be bad for the consultant's reputation. Fortunately, there's always an escape clause:

[The consultant's projects] can only be judged, conveniently, over a period of years. If the outcome is disaster, the consultant can always argue either that the client failed to implement the advice properly, or that the glue would have been still stickier without his advice – an argument which has the great virtue of being wholly irrefutable (and wholly unprovable, for that matter) (Heller)

Fault can lie with the clients, who may often fail to identify the root causes of issues before they engage consultants, or fail to really understand what they want them to do. That means the requirements are not well defined, or the consultants arrive to find that the climate is not right for them to succeed. Consultants should not be put where their

effectiveness cannot be measured: “the best reason for using a consultant is that he knows something you don’t know. It takes a high class manager to know when he needs a consultant, to get full value, and to take the expert’s advice critically and unemotionally” (Heller; Czerniawska and Smith).

In examining the dynamics of the consultant-client relationship, some researchers have concluded that effective consulting must be more than the mere delivery of advice. It is a two-way process: an inter-dependent power relationship, a social act that is actually emotional and messy. It requires clear, honest and open communication between the parties, creating a capital of trust. If the consultant stays in control of the relationship it may not develop that way (Chia; Andersson and Tornngren; Palmer-Woodward).

In a report on the use of consultants in the UK Civil Service, the British National Audit Office⁴⁹ noted that there was some way to go before government was achieving good value. It said that departments did not make proper assessments of whether internal sources could be used instead, didn’t have adequate contracts, did not actively manage relationships and did not undertake post-project performance reviews. It noted that responsibility for the outcome rests with the client. Public bodies needed to be smarter in understanding how consultants operate, and provide incentives to staff to make the consultancy a success. Commentators in *The Times* and *The Spectator* were more vivid in their assessment of massive government waste on consultants (D. Craig; Liddle).

In hiring consultants it therefore pays to work through a checklist of requirements and potential pitfalls. For example, carefully choose the consultant by having two or three pitch for the business and by getting your own referee reports; identify the nature and scope of the task with its costs, clear deliverables, timeframes and progress reports; and

⁴⁹ National Audit Office, Central Government's Use of Consultants: Building Client and Consultant Commitment. (London: UK Government, 2006), National Audit Office, Central Government's Use of Consultants: Methodology. (London: UK Government, 2006), Fiona Czerniawska, Central Government's Use of Consultants: Market Analysis. (London: UK Government, 2006), National Audit Office, Central Government's Use of Consultants. (London: UK Government, 2006). This range of publications represents a comprehensive government analysis.

maintain your own control of the process. Managing an effective relationship between consultant and client throughout the project is something that has to be continually worked on (Jack Gordon; Sturdy et al.; Czerniawska and Smith; Altman).

CONCLUSION

Management consultants are a rapidly growing phenomenon, and opinion is starkly divided on their value and effectiveness. Results are hard to assess, and responsibility for the outcome always rests with the client. Effective use of consultants involves choosing wisely and establishing clear expectations, costs, timeframes and deliverables. The consultant needs a trustful climate in which to operate, but should not be allowed to take control of the process. Nor should they be hired for the wrong reasons, such as providing apparently independent endorsement for a predetermined outcome.

2.6 MARKETING, POSITIONING AND BRANDING

In addition to the monographs and articles referenced below, evidence has included numerous items and clippings from newspapers and magazines, as well as the extensive website www.brandchannel.com which is exclusively devoted to the subjects of branding and positioning. Though these topics are applicable in broad terms to the long evolution of NFSA's identity, research has focussed particularly on those sources which seemed to offer some context to the 1999 renaming and rebranding of the NFSA as ScreenSound Australia, a task that was undertaken with the initial assistance of a corporate positioning consultant, and the NFSA's subsequent incorporation into the AFC. The relevant period is 1998 to 2008. There has been no intention to thoroughly canvass an immense literature beyond that which is applicable to the NFSA's specific situation.

The published literature in this field derives largely from the world of commerce. Only in recent years has research moved into the realm of non-profit organisations. Whether particularly aware of it or not, all memory institutions have a *brand* – a name, perhaps a logo and corporate style, a measure of recognition in the eyes of its public – and some equity in that brand. Each also has a *position* in its particular marketplace (Kuraoka; Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin).

For a fuller definition of the concepts of *branding*, *brand equity*, *logo*, *positioning*, *rebranding* and *corporate identity* see [Appendix 6](#)

2.6.1 THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BRANDING

A brand may be defined as a mixture of tangible and intangible attributes, symbolised in a trade mark, which creates value and influence. It may include a name, logo, corporate style and other features which evoke images and associations.

The fundamental principles of branding vary, depending on which eye is beholding them. They have been long understood and employed by advertisers (Turner); they have historically derived from great thinkers, starting with the Greeks of antiquity; they are distilled from analysing the evolution of brands over time; they coalesce into a fixed set of laws or principles specific to the author⁵⁰; or they need to be rethought from square one (Baskin; Braun; Aaker; Dolak; Ries and Ries).

Case studies and illustrative examples abound in the literature. Virtually every international brand known to Australians, and many that are not, is analysed and cited, their successes and failures assessed. It is a moot point whether success or failure was a result of following or ignoring any of these principles, or whether the principles are inferred from the examples. The essential subjectivity of the field probably makes this question unanswerable. Yet the extent of analysis in the industry is unending, as vast profits turn on the effectiveness or otherwise of commercial brands⁵¹ (Interbrand; Silverstein; Kuraoka).

⁵⁰ For example, while Lies puts forward 22 laws, Walvis argues on neuroscientific grounds that there are just three. Law 1: The higher the distinctive relevance of branding efforts, the more likely the brand will be chosen. Law 2: The higher the coherence of branding efforts across time and space, the more likely the brand will be chosen. Law 3: The more engaging the branding environment that is created, the more likely the brand will be chosen. Tjaco H Walvis, "Three Laws of Branding: Neuroscientific Foundations of Effective Brand Building" Journal of Brand Management 16.3 (2007).

⁵¹ "Its brand is a company's most precious, tangible, long term corporate asset: your brand is who you are. It defines you even more than what you do defines you" John Kuraoka, "Brands and Branding: A White Paper," (c 2002), <www.kuraoka.com>.

Some writers rely less on case studies. They observe that a brand represents a collection of feelings and perceptions about quality, image, lifestyle and status which are hard to grasp and describe: that, indeed, a brand is simply a person's gut feeling about a product, service or organisation. The brand is what the customer, not the organisation, says it is. It is argued that people do not make rational decisions in their brand attachments: emotion comes before logic. To complete the picture there are views on how *not* to manage a brand, and on where responsibility for success or failure lies. (Neumeier and American Institute of Graphic Arts.; Alvey; Smith; Dolak; Nissim)

POSITIONING⁵²

"Positioning is what you do in the mind of the prospect – it is getting heard in our over-communicated society." It includes being first and establishing perceived 'ownership' of a field: for example, Coca Cola in cola drinks. Or claiming your place in a field: "Seven-up: the uncola" or "Avis is number two in rent-a-cars so go with us: we try harder". Positioning includes the product name: the "single most important marketing decision". A brand needs to own a simple, focussed position in the prospects's mind (Ries and Trout; Townsend).

A refinement of the concept, applicable to cultural institutions, has been dubbed 'cultural branding' and includes icons that people rely on to express their identity and which 'perform a myth that addresses an acute contradiction in society'. This obviously includes institutions like the NFSA (Holt).

⁵² The Nazi party is a pungent and memorable illustration of branding and positioning: the swastika, flag design and colours are bold and simple, and draw on ancient myths: no text necessary. Its leader's choice of surname may also have been a crucial marketing decision: "Heil Hitler" was surely a more effective acclamation than "Heil Schicklgruber". David Lewis, The Man Who Invented Hitler (London: Headline, 2003).

NAMES

One approach to analysing names is to categorise them as *descriptive*, *geographic*, *patronymic*, *acronymic*, *associative* and *freestanding* (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin). The Bank of Melbourne is both descriptive and geographic. Disney, Nobel, Ford and McDonalds are patronymic. IBM, KFC and HSBC are acronymic. Jaguar and Taurus are associative, suggesting cars with elegance and aggression. Xerox and Kodak are freestanding invented names. Another approach offers four categories: *functional* [British Airways] *invented* [Firefox], *experiential* [Altavista] and *evocative* [Virgin] (Hochman). Again, such categorisation can be abandoned for other kinds of analysis. Kalashnikov and Schweppes are associative in the use of onomatopoeia. Many well known corporates, such as Adidas, Aldi, eBay, Canon and Qantas⁵³, have ‘accidental’ names which did not originate as part of a marketing strategy. Others built on the credibility accruing from authoritative associations: Dr Morse’s Indian Root Pills and Dr Williams’ Pink Pills for Pale People were among the most successful patent medicines of the 19th and early 20th centuries.⁵⁴ Flouting convention is yet another way of attracting attention with radical names like Yahoo, Google and Fatsplash (*Business Miscellany*; Blackett; Neumeier and American Institute of Graphic Arts.).

Sometimes psychology is the most important consideration, where a depth of meaning can be associated with a name which triggers emotional as well as rational responses. Winston Churchill insisted that the wartime Local Defence Volunteers be renamed the Home Guard, a name which better invoked a sense of pride, status, responsibility and patriotism (McCann; Gray).

⁵³ Actually an acronym for the company’s original name, the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service, although this origin is no longer publicised.

⁵⁴ It seemed not to matter that these celebrated medicos were entirely fictitious. Robert B. Shaw, History of the Comstock Patent Medicine Business and Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills, Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology, No. 22 (Washington,: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972). Peter J Phillips, Kill or Cure: Lotions, Potions, Characters and Quacks of Early Australia (Greenhouse, 1978), James Harvey Young, The Toadstool Millionaires: a Social History of Patent Medicines in America before Federal Regulation (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961).

Some commentators suggest that effective brand names need to satisfy a check list of qualities, although the lists are individual to the writers. For example:

- Don't describe – distinguish. The name should suggest the essence of the company
- Avoid alphabet soup. Acronyms are meaningless, the corporate equivalent of a disguise. Real or invented words are much easier to remember.
- If it's comfortable, forget it. Everyone else will. The most successful names long-term are those that are initially the most controversial.
- Keep it brief. One word brands are the most effective. Long names will be truncated.
- Employee contests don't work. While well meaning, they don't result in names based on the appropriate strategic rationale.
- Make a thorough competitive analysis, quantifying the tone and strength of competitive company and product names.
- Check out studies on successful brands
- Check out the name for appearance, depth, energy, humanity and sound

In addition, there are practicalities such as whether a proposed name is actually available for trademark registration. Igor offers a grid for numerically scoring a name against many of the above characteristics, but recognises the essential subjectivity of the process (Hochman; Jacobs; Neumeier and American Institute of Graphic Arts.)

Despite the above advice, acronyms seem to flourish (cf. UNESCO, NRMA, ABC, CIA, CSIRO), including their wide use by institutions and professional societies in the audiovisual archiving field (cf. FIAF, ICA, IASA, AMIA, NFSA) even though a Google search would reveal that almost any set of letters has multiple owners. IASA is the International Aviation Safety Association, ICA is the Institute of Chartered Accountants, while the CIA is, of course, the Culinary Institute of America (Jacobs).

2.6.2 REBRANDING

Corporate rebranding can be described as the practice of building a *new* identity, representing a differentiated position in the mind of stakeholders. There is a continuum from revolutionary change (name, logo and slogan) to evolutionary change (slogan or logo only). Statistically, the main driver of rebranding is a change in ownership structure (takeover, merger or demerger) which outmodes the existing identity. Other drivers are a change in corporate strategy (diversification, internationalisation, and localisation), a change in competitive position (outdated image, erosion of market position, reputation problems) or change in external environment (legal regulation, crises, and catastrophes). Looking over its entire story from 1935 onward, the NFSA has probably found itself in all four change categories at different times as its identity has evolved. The 1999 rebranding was clearly at the revolutionary end of the continuum. Changes at other times were closer to evolutionary (Stuart and Muzellec; Duncan; Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin).

There is evidence in the business world of a growing propensity for renaming, with a preference for shorter, more abstract titles. There are risks. Discarding a long-held brand name and starting again from scratch may cost reputation and potentially destroy brand equity accrued over many years⁵⁵ (Muzellec and Lambkin; Plewa, Lu and Veale). It might attract negative reactions from those who feel disenfranchised. Renaming implies a significant change in the organisation, its strategy or direction, so there needs to be a clear rationale. Implementing the change can be very expensive, both in direct expense and opportunity cost. Non-profit organisations tend not to assess the value of their brands, and moving with the trend to adopt 'clever' names (such as coined words and Latin or Greek names to add to the mystique of the organisation) may actually

⁵⁵ When the Swiss banking company UBS scrapped the names of subsidiaries S G Warburg and PaineWebber in order to promote UBS as a unique global brand, it took a non-cash charge of US \$770 million - the value which the two brands carried on its balance sheet. Helen Stuart and Laurent Muzellec, "Corporate Makeovers: Can a Hyena Be Rebranded?," *Brand Management* 11.6 (2004).

devalue their role as community service providers (Stuart and Muzellec; Perkins; Liu and Tang; Rusch; Serrat).

The rebranding process needs to be well planned, comprehensive and of sufficient duration, and does not necessarily involve renaming (Slack; Henderson and Cote). It may be evolutionary, only involving changes to logos, slogans and publicity. Potential benefits need to be assessed, there needs to be clarity about what is being publicly signalled,⁵⁶ and key stakeholders, including staff, need to understand and support the change. Focus groups and in-depth interviews may be part of the qualitative research (Dick; L.Krotz; Idema and Braithwaite). To retain brand equity a bridge needs to be built from the 'old' to the 'new'. The changes need to be adequately promoted. Careful research both before and after is vital. While it may difficult to measure success or

failure after the event, the changes must be evaluated against their original goals.

Rebranding attracts cynicism if it appears to be about 'trappings' rather than 'substance' (Gruen, Summers and Acito; Merrilees and Miller; Muzellec and Lambkin; Streader and Whitehouse; Amon; Roythorne).

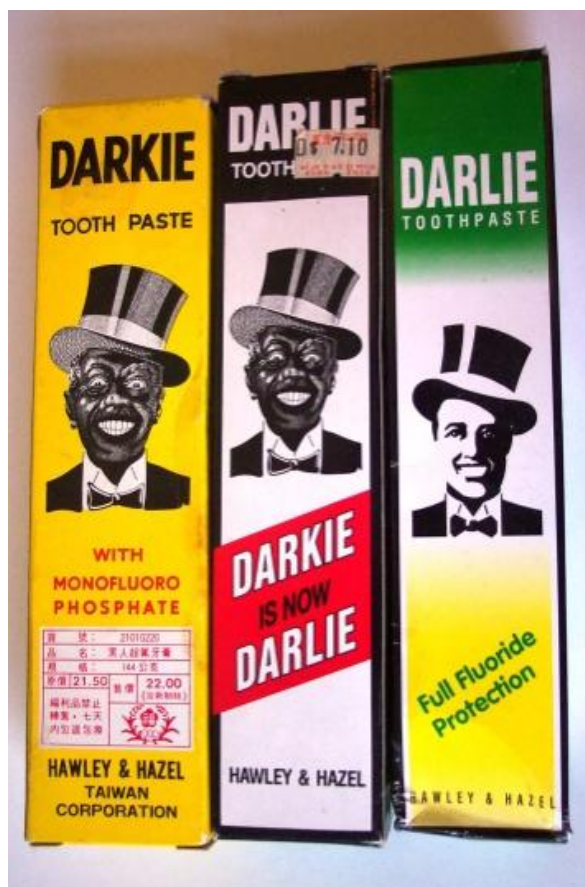


Fig.1: *Darkie to Darlie*: successfully transferring brand equity (source: Whole Pop Magazine Online)

⁵⁶ Perhaps more convincingly than the Arnell group explained its \$1 million redesign of Pepsi's logo with references to the "golden ratio" and "gravitational pull", arguing that "going back-to-the-roots moves the brand forward as it changes the trajectory of the future". Schumpeter, "Logoland: Why Consumers Balk at Companies' Efforts to Rebrand Themselves " The Economist 13 January 2011..

Case examples of both successes and failures abound. Colgate apparently successfully transferred brand equity from its politically incorrect “Darkie” brand toothpaste to “Darlie” brand, a change of name and visual design (Whole Pop Magazine Online). Accenture transitioned from its former brand, Arthur Andersen Consulting, at considerable cost but with impeccable timing, just before its parent company collapsed in the fallout from the Enron scandal (Alvey)⁵⁷ Philip Morris became Altria in order to distance itself from the moral baggage of tobacco associations (Stuart and Muzellec) Irish telco Eircell became Vodafone Ireland in what is assessed as a positive rebranding following a takeover. Perhaps more cynically, the British town of Windscale was renamed Sellafield after a serious accident in the nearby nuclear reactor (Clifton; Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin; Muzellec and Lambkin; Crikey).

It is perhaps the catalogue of failures that make more informative reading. In his book *Brand Failures* Matt Haig analyses a hundred of them, and there are many more which have attracted adverse reports in the media and elsewhere. For example:

- Song and Ted were short-lived American budget airlines established, respectively, by Delta and United Airlines in 2003. The radical brands were a departure from standard airline nomenclature. They failed after a couple of years (Maynard; Danzig)
- When Westpac took over the Bank of Melbourne in 2004, it absorbed the organisation and dropped the brand. It reversed the decision in 2011 because market research had revealed a “deep affection” for the old brand (Josh Gordon)
- In 2007 the British Film Institute (BFI) renamed the long established National Film Theatre as “bfi Southbank”, the latest in a sequence of rebrandings and

⁵⁷ The cost may have been as high as US \$370 million. In his interview with Brian Alvey, Marty Neumeier thought Accenture one of the worst brand names he had encountered. “It’s so bad, in fact, that it’s gained a certain fame from its badness. Brian Alvey, “An Interview with Marty Neumeier,” (2003)

subsequent reversals within the organisation. It got short shrift from the media: “the stupidest name change of the year”.⁵⁸

- The venerable British insurer Norwich Union changed to Aviva in 2009, claiming the new brand to be “short, memorable, feels positive and lively”. The *Guardian* saw it as a triumph of the blandly homogenous over the local and particular. It may be too early to gauge its comparative success⁵⁹ (Hughes)
- In 1997 British Airways changed its Union Jack tail fin design to a variety of abstract world images, leading not only to popular outrage but also to air traffic control problems. The rebranding was interpreted as an attempt by new CEO, Bob Ayling, to put his personal mark on the company. The policy was reversed in 1999 (Stuart and Muzellec)

The list could go on: PricewaterhouseCooper’s attempt to demerge and rebrand its consultancy arm as *Monday*; Abbey National paying GB £ 26 million to drop the ‘National’ and the upper case ‘A’, and up to US\$ 35 million to change KPMG Consulting to *Bearing Point*. Even the Department of Social Security turning into Centrelink (Santalink?) has not escaped unscathed. The brand is associated with pensioners being asked to repay money because of bureaucratic mistakes (Haig; Lister; Roythorne).

A well referenced brand failure of recent years was the rebadging of the UK Post Office Group as *Consignia* to coincide with its corporatisation. Two years of preparation and qualitative research by consultants Dragon Brands included interviewing postal workers, MPs, clients, customers and business people. The new brand was announced in

⁵⁸ “...something of a national institution and has name recognition even among those who have never actually sat in its hushed auditoria. Having spent years getting the sort of name recognition that most arts institutions would die for, it has decided to give itself three boring initials, short for an administrative body...which has none of the romance and flavour of art-house movies among fellow film buffs that the old NFT conjured up.” David Lister, “Vandalism at the National Film Theatre,” *The Independent* 3 February 2007.

⁵⁹ “While the old name suggests the verbal contracts and gentleman’s agreements of a provincial city on a market day, Aviva has a kind of bleached-out nullity that speaks of faceless corporations and the kind of financial trickery that no-one understands. ...It sounds like a brand of vitamin pill or super-slim sanitary towel!” Kathryn Hughes, “Bleaching out a Brand: As Aviva, Norwich Union Will Sound More Like an Unreliable Rail Network Than a Trusted Insurer,” *The Guardian* 22 January 2009..

January 2001 and was well received in corporate circles. Said Dragon Brands' Keith Wells: "It's got consign in it. It's got a link with insignia, so there's this kind of royalty-ish thing in the back of one's mind...and the dictionary definition of consign means 'to entrust to the care of'. That goes right back to sustaining trust, which was very, very important." But the public, led by the media, did not see these nuances. They saw change for the sake of change, and the loss of the treasured post office name which had been part of British history for over three hundred years. Consignia reverted to the Post Office Group the following year. The consultants and the management had failed to understand the public's emotional attachment to a traditional brand, and forgot about the power of the media to remind the public about such attachments and critique corporate re-badging (Haig; Sauer; Verdin; Senior).

The American Special Libraries Association had a somewhat parallel experience. For two years a 'branding task force' worked with consultants to develop a new brand aimed at staunching declining membership numbers. The task received extended coverage in professional journals. When the recommended new name *Information Professionals International* finally emerged in 2003, it was nevertheless rejected by the membership. The existing name was reaffirmed and the membership decline corrected itself independently. If the rebranding was a solution in search of a problem, and the task force had failed to discern the views of the members, perhaps the members too had not engaged with the reality of change until confronted with a decision. (Special Libraries Association; Anonymous "Branding: An Interview with a PR Pro; DiMattia and Blumenstein; Olson; Romaine; Kenney; Anonymous "Would You Buy SLA?").

Stuart and Muzellec suggest four questions to be addressed before launching into a rebranding: (a) what will happen if we don't make this change? (b) exactly what is being signaled? (c) are the key stakeholders cognisant and positive about the change? (d) what will be the reaction of competitors to this change, or is the organisation merely reacting to its competitors? If the answer to (a) is "not much", there may be no justification: a change initiated by a CEO or a perceived need to update the image is

often an ill-considered change. Other commentators suggest repositioning rather than rebranding. The risks are too great to expose the organisation's reputation and equity lightly. Rebranding is not a panacea for other problems. (Stuart and Muzellec; Kuraoka; Duncan)

MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

In recent years libraries, archives and museums have found themselves adapting commercial principles of branding and marketing to their own needs, despite some reluctance and a penchant for mission statements padded out with lofty but non-specific terms. In part this is a response to economic rationalist forces⁶⁰ and in part to the realities of a more competitive world where institutions have to reassess their role in society, define their place in the community and their identity, give it a look (logo, signage, display), execute it and live it. The literature and the experience seem strongest for the museum sector, where visitor numbers are perceived as a quantifiable, central measure of rationale and relevance. There is a greater need for accountability, and museums need to see themselves as part of a broader leisure industry – not just competing against each other (Tan; Department of Finance; Walsh; Lehman)

There is a countervailing view that the logic of marketing and branding is perverting the very nature of the fundamental non-commercial institutions of society, such as museums, churches and universities, which sacrifice standards, messages, policies and purpose in the pursuit of commercial advantage. The contrary stance is that a branded church understands who they are, who they are trying to reach and communicates that effectively through integrated marketing. (Twitchell; Colyer)

⁶⁰ “Unfortunately the philistines are still at the gate and, as so often in the past, the [British] Museum, still starved of public funds, has increasingly to kow-tow to a government department which holds the purse strings, has apparently little real understanding of its function, and whose civil servants have recently been criticised officially for their lack of trust in their clients” David M. Wilson, *The British Museum : A History* (London, 2002). p 344

Museums need a strong branding for fundraising purposes and this awareness has to permeate all aspects of a museum's operation. The brand names of institutions like the British Museum and the Guggenheim Museum actually have immense value, because of their pulling power for tourism, their collections, and their high recognition. The perceived quality and positive associations are part of the strength of a brand, but they build slowly. In a case study of the Guggenheim and Louvre museums, Law contends that trends related to tourism have replaced the "focus on collection with the focus on audience experiences and operation in a global framework" so these museums have developed deliberate strategies to implant their brand and image in public consciousness (Law). Building the Louvre's iconic entrance pyramid, and a program of lending collection items for exhibit in other countries, are part of the Louvre's approach, while the Guggenheim has developed a method of franchising its brand to 'satellite' museums. Any branding process should have clear objectives and be evaluated over time (Caldwell; Rowley; Kim)

CONCLUSION

The asset value of names and brands for products and organisations has long been known: their 'equity' needs to be assessed and protected, and names can have great depth of meaning and association. Yet branding, positioning and especially rebranding are as much art as science. Expensive failures abound, and customer or stakeholder reaction will not necessarily be rational. Rebranding should be approached with care, consultation and forethought, and its success or failure subsequently assessed in case the move needs to be reversed. Repositioning is often preferable to rebranding.

2.7 CONCLUSIONS

Documenting a first organisational history for the NFSA will bring it into the company of its peers here and overseas, and fill a vacuum that will help anchor an institution that is still in the process of establishing its identity and implementing its governance and philosophy as a fully fledged statutory authority. In particular, the histories of the film and sound areas of the NLA, from 1935 to 1984, have never been comprehensively documented either by the NLA, NFSA or other writers. Approaching the subject from the perspective of a gradual move towards autonomy and ultimate separation is essential to not only explain why the NFSA was created, but also to present an alternative narrative to the conspiracy theories which became orthodoxy within the NLA after 1984 to account for the separation. For the first time, as part of that story, the NLA's stewardship of the nation's audiovisual history for half a century is critiqued, and the high level public confrontations which surrounded the NFSA's demerger from the NLA are analysed in detail.

Institutional rebrandings and mergers in the international field of memory institutions, sometimes driven by external agendas that are neither transparent nor necessarily directed at their best interests, are a constant hazard to institutional integrity and the preservation of collections. Their success or failure is rarely analysed, for it is often politically inopportune to do so. Hence, unsuccessful patterns are repeated without the opportunity to learn from mistakes, nor for advocates to work from the basis of documented knowledge. After demerger from the NLA, the NFSA's subsequent experiences of an ill-advised and unsuccessful rebranding, followed by a disastrous merger which nearly destroyed the institution, were observed with concern by institutional peers around the world.

The resolution of all three situations required parliamentary debate, reversals of government policy and the successful advocacy of stakeholder groups. Moreover, they were conducted in the glare of media attention. None of these three experiences has direct parallels in the literature. A detailed investigation of them is now addressed for the first time, as both a matter of history and as a reference point and encouragement for other institutions facing threats to their identity and collections or to their independent survival.

That operation had all the characteristics of rape: the cynicism, the utter lack of scruple and the plain treachery that accompanied that particular crime against society.

Harrison Bryan, former Director General, National Library of Australia,
recalling in 1988 the separation of the NFSA four years earlier

3.1 ANTECEDENTS: THE NATIONAL LIBRARY PERIOD – 1935 TO 1984

This chapter is a chronological narrative of an organised institutional activity and function which, in the course of time, grew and evolved into a discrete institution in its own right. It primarily traces political and administrative events, and the influence of circumstances and key personalities, but largely passes over other elements that would normally belong in a corporate history, such as the growth of collections, curatorial activity and the evolution of technology. Of necessity, from 1968 onwards, there is personal narrative mixed in with documentary evidence.

3.1.1 PREHISTORY OF AN AUSTRALIAN FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE 1935-1970

Australia was among the earliest countries to exploit the potential of the film and sound media for entertainment, art and communication, and to understand and formally recognise their significance and potential as documentary record. In 1901, pioneer anthropologist Walter Baldwin Spencer took a Bioscope camera and an Edison phonograph on a research trip to Central Australia, capturing moving images and sound recordings of Aboriginal ceremonies to create some of the earliest audiovisual ethnographic records.⁶¹ The original materials are now held by the NFSA.

The nation's first professional film production unit, the Salvation Army's Limelight Department⁶², not only created the two-hour multi-media religious spectacle *Soldiers of the Cross* in 1900, but was hired by the NSW Government to cover the Federation

⁶¹ Long and Long, The Pictures That Moved: A Picture History of the Australian Cinema 1896-1929.

⁶² Originally set up at Salvation Army headquarters in Melbourne to produce and present lantern slide shows, it was a natural extension of their work to add motion pictures.

ceremonies in Sydney on 1 January 1901, documenting them on cinematograph film as an “imperishable” record⁶³. The actual moment of the nation’s creation was recorded, making Australia the first country born in front of a movie camera. Subsequent steps in nation building, such as the naming of Canberra (1913) and the opening of Parliament in Canberra (1927) were documented on film. In 1911, pioneering entrepreneur J D Williams foresaw it as the “duty of the Government to establish an historical department which would secure films of the great events of our time for the benefit and interest of those who come after us”.⁶⁴

3.1.2 NATIONAL HISTORICAL FILM AND SPEAKING RECORD LIBRARY (NHFR) – AND SUCCESSOR

There were early instances of films being lodged with libraries for safekeeping but, so far as can now be ascertained, little has survived.⁶⁵ A Federal Cabinet decision in 1935⁶⁶ created the National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library (NHFR) under the joint aegis of the Commonwealth National Library (CNL) and the Department of Commerce. A public announcement of its establishment was made on 4 February 1936 by the Minister for Commerce, Dr Earle Page. He expressed a sense of urgency – “it was

⁶³ “Premier [Lynne] has been asked if the Government would take steps to secure an imperishable record of such an important event as the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia by having a series of cinematograph pictures taken..... Sir William Lynne has indicated the willingness of the Government to give every assistance in procuring such pictures.” *Sydney Morning Herald* 12 November 1900 p 5. Dozens of prints were made, for screening across the country and overseas. It is not clear what, if any, arrangements were made at the time for the safekeeping and preservation of the film. While the original negative is not extant, a positive print of most of the film survived and is held by NFSA.

⁶⁴ C A Jeffries, “The Greater J D Williams Banyan Tree,” *Lone Hand* 1 July 1911.

⁶⁵ In 1915, 35mm nitrate prints of *Will they never come?* and *The hero of the Dardanelles* were deposited with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Melbourne. Pike and Cooper, *Australian Film, 1900-1977: A Guide to Feature Film Production*. The opening few minutes of the latter film, held in the NFSA, is presumably all that now survives of this deposit. The rest may have deteriorated in storage, been lost in a fire or discarded.

⁶⁶ Minutes of Cabinet meeting 11 Dec 1935, agenda no.1647, records its creation. An attachment sets out its aims and scope, “to secure and permanently preserve within the Commonwealth National Library approved historical films and sound recordings”, as well as the basic mechanics of its operation, under the joint administration of the Department of Commerce and the National Library. The “Librarian of the National Library” was to be responsible as the custodian of the collection, and film selection was to be controlled by a committee comprising the Officer-in-charge of the Cinema Branch of the Department of Commerce, a representative of the Motion Picture Distributors’ Association, and the Librarian of the National Library.

essential that an early start be made” – and context – “the Commonwealth would come into line with other progressive countries, chiefly Great Britain and the United States [and other] European countries”. It was revealed that a nucleus for the collection already existed in the Cinema Branch of the Department of Commerce, the government film production unit of the time, “which already has many historical films collected”.⁶⁷ Some months later, the first meeting of the National Film Committee presiding over the new entity was reported.⁶⁸

The guiding hands appear to have been National Librarian Kenneth Binns and Cinema Branch head Lyn T Maplestone. In retrospect, it was a visionary move. The report suggests knowledge of the pioneering film archives in England, United States, France and Germany which would soon inaugurate FIAF. It also suggests awareness of the pioneering sound archives in Europe. For the CNL, as a new institution needing to carve out a role for itself alongside larger and older state libraries, it was a concept without state-based rivals. This was possibly the world’s first formal attempt to recognise the *link* between the moving image and recorded sound media in archival terms: a concept that we now call the audiovisual archive, but which would not become commonplace until the 21st century. Its name and joint administration gave it a clear identity, and its governing committee embodied a partnership between government and the film industry. This was a remarkably advanced idea, given the subsequent history of film industry antagonism to the pioneering international film archive movement.

Beyond these founding records, which include a budget, no catalogue or inventory of the NHFR collection is known. The film was stored “in the National Library, Canberra,

⁶⁷ Brief reports appear in the Sydney Morning Herald (p 10), The Mercury (p 9), The Canberra Times (p 4) and The Argus (p 6) on 4 February 1936, evidently based on the same press release.

⁶⁸ The Canberra Times of 15 September 1936 foreshadows the meeting. *Film Weekly*, 29 Oct 1936 then reports on “the first meeting of the Committee of the Historical Film Library yesterday”, attended by L T Maplestone (Photographic and Cinema Branch of the Department of Commerce), K Binns (Librarian of the Commonwealth National Library) and Stanley S Crick (Managing Director of Fox Film Corp. – representing the film industry). The report adds that “in almost all countries today the film and gramophone records are recognised as a new and valuable medium for preserving the record of national events and progress....already films of national events dating back to 1901 have been secured, and the fullest cooperation of the motion picture industry in Australia has been promised”.

and in the Department of Information film storage unit at Latham House, Melbourne. “About one fifth of the collection was on nitrate base film.”⁶⁹ Activity lapsed during World War II.⁷⁰ In 1940 the Cinema Branch transferred from Department of Commerce to the wartime Department of Information and post-war, the NHFR, as such, was not revived, as Binns turned his attention to a new priority.

During the 1930s, the use of film in schools expanded. By 1939 four state education departments had established film libraries and plans were afoot to establish a “national library of educational films” to service a fully developed federal system. The war halted progress, but the scheme was revived post-war with the establishment of the Australian National Film Board⁷¹ and the consequent setting up of the CNL’s Film Division (FD) in late 1945. It would serve as a central distribution agency for the Board’s, and other, non-theatrical films, and the National Librarian was an ex officio Board member. Government-sponsored community film lending was a socially innovative idea, exploiting the potential of the 16mm film gauge⁷² which had been popularised during the war. In 1947, John O’Hara, a well-credentialed school teacher from Victoria, was

⁶⁹ 35mm cellulose nitrate film was universally used by film industries until the early 1950s. It was tough and serviceable, but also highly inflammable, requiring appropriate care in handling and retention in purpose-designed storage facilities. Careless handling could result in fires which were very difficult to extinguish.

⁷⁰ An undated and unsigned document, file reference G 1/8/11, apparently written by Binns in September 1944, mentions “the collecting policy during the Library’s brief period of activity” and gives a general description of the collection with specific examples. The films were housed in Canberra and Melbourne; eighty per cent of the films were on acetate base; a card catalogue had been compiled. It notes that “operations since the outbreak of the war have been considerably reduced”.

⁷¹ Modelled on the pre-war Canadian equivalent headed by British documentary theorist John Grierson, the Board was responsible for the Commonwealth Government’s film production organisation, later known as the Commonwealth Film Unit and subsequently Film Australia. Rod Wallace details the background. Wallace, “The Film Division - Past, Present and Future.”

⁷² Sixteen millimetre – 16mm – acetate safety film was non-flammable and suitable for use on portable projectors in non-theatrical locations like classrooms and public halls.

appointed to head the FD. His small staff included a recently demobbed Rod Wallace⁷³ who, on his first day in November 1945, encountered an ominous welcome.⁷⁴

It is presumed that the NHFR collection was absorbed by the new FD, although extant records are too sketchy to confirm this, and NHFR's card catalogue apparently does not survive. A clear conceptual or administrative divide between 'archive' and 'distribution' collections does not seem to have existed until the 1960s, well after the FD had joined FIAF. In any event, the burgeoning distribution activity now consumed all available resources.⁷⁵ So rapidly did the concept of a 'national film library' develop that in plans for a new National Library complex, presented in 1949 to the Parliamentary Committee on Public Works,⁷⁶ the FD was allotted its own building and theatre, standing beside but apart from the main library edifice.⁷⁷ The Committee, however, demurred. Binns' successor, Harold White⁷⁸, did not get his building, and the FD, like the rest of the CNL, had to make do in its scattered, temporary accommodation.

⁷³ A former Army psychologist, Rod Wallace headed FD from 1956 until 1965, when he became Coordinator of Special Collections (which included Films, and much later, Sound Recordings.) Wallace found O'Hara an enthusiast and kindred spirit, and, at the beginning, a great admirer of Harold White. He remembers they were "crusaders for film". Roderick John Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup, 1984.

⁷⁴ On being introduced by one George O'Neill to other CNL staff ("another bloody graduate" said one) Wallace recalls "his first sentence told me this new section wasn't popular in the Library. I was introduced as the new member of the 'glamour section'. Films have never been quite *in* the Library. I was extremely raw, very nervous, newly married, no money, I had to keep my job." He was told Harold White had got Films into the Library: it wouldn't be there if others had had their way." Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

⁷⁵ Distribution films were and are consumables: they deteriorate with use. They were withdrawn and disposed of when out of date or no longer serviceable, or when distribution rights lapsed. Their cost was amortised through their constant use: loans had to be booked in advance, films despatched and received back on specific dates, and in between bookings each print had to be checked for damage. Archival films are managed with a completely different regime, since the intent is permanent preservation.

⁷⁶ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, National Library and Roosevelt Memorial, Canberra. Australian Capital Territory: Minutes of Evidence (Canberra, 1949), Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Report Relating to the Proposed Erection of the National Library and Roosevelt Memorial, Canberra. Australian Capital Territory. (Canberra, 1949).

⁷⁷ A detailed design for a building that closely matches this vision is extant. Dated December 1950, it is identified as a "thesis design problem". See P I P Hamilton, "A Design for an Australian National Film Library to Be Situated in Canberra," (1950), vol.. The building provides spaces for the film distribution library, filmstrips, sound recordings, slides, microfilm, stills, posters, film repair and the chemical testing of "historic film", public display areas, a theatre, and climate controlled film storage. See also Michael Piggott, "The Visit of Dr T R Schellenberg to Australia," University of New South Wales, 1989.

⁷⁸ Binns retired on 28 November 1947 after twenty years as Parliamentary and National Librarian, warmly nominating his Deputy, Harold White, as successor. Initially retained, at his own request, as an advisor, Binns soon

Wallace recalls O'Hara had a profound falling-out with Harold White in 1951, and around that time he began to campaign for the removal of the FD from the CNL, recruiting the state film libraries and others to the cause. In 1952 he sent Wallace to hand deliver a substantial document critical of the Library's treatment of film to every Departmental Secretary. O'Hara's career in the Library was abruptly terminated.⁷⁹ While this document is not extant, a similar paper by O'Hara survives. It cites overseas practice, dissimilarities in work and training compared to traditional librarianship, and the adverse effect of integrating 'film' and 'library' positions.⁸⁰ After O'Hara's removal, it seems the lobbying campaign continued, driven by the state film libraries who were angry about O'Hara's departure.

The timing was appropriate. The Paton Committee on the future of the CNL⁸¹, set up in response to the recommendations of a 1952 Interdepartmental Committee (IDC), made a delayed start in May 1956, reporting in April 1957.⁸² Among the witnesses was Neil Edwards, CEO of the Victorian State Film Centre. Departing from the model of the American Library of Congress, and contrary to Harold White's stance,⁸³ the Committee

found himself frozen out by White, complaining about this to the Speaker of the House. (First letter undated but precedes retirement; second letter dated 4 September 1949; held in the Binns papers, MS 9822, NLA)

⁷⁹ Wallace was instructed to place the envelope personally into the hand of each Department head. He never read the document, but recalled that it was about 20 pages, and that the heading began "Hostile administration of the Library...". The morning after Wallace made his delivery to the head of the Prime Minister's department, O'Hara was summoned to White's office. He never reappeared in FD. Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

⁸⁰ John O'Hara, "The Case for Detaching the Film Library from the National Library," (Commonwealth National Library, c 1953), vol. There was logic in his argument: FD served a discrete state-based network of film libraries and had its own distinct clientele.

⁸¹ For the reasons behind the establishment of this Committee, see Piggott, "The Visit of Dr T R Schellenberg to Australia."

⁸² G H Paton, Report of the National Library Enquiry Committee 1956-57 (1957). Evidence given to the enquiry included details of the 'National Library' part of the CNL's structure, which comprised six Divisions: Preparation, General Administration, Reference, Extension, Archives, Films. While the Film and Archive Divisions had equal status at this point, Archives subsequently become a separate entity and Films did not. Over the coming years the Film 'Division' became the Film 'Section' and its relative status within the NLA declined.

⁸³ Harold (later Sir Harold) White was perceived to take a strong interest in film activities. He personally approved every program for the weekly Parliamentary screening, as Rod Wallace recalls at length (Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.) While the FD had little in common with the rest of the Library, it was required to follow irrelevant and unworkable Library practices, such as book-style cataloguing and shelving films by Dewey

recommended that the CNL be divided into three organisations: a Commonwealth Parliamentary Library (CPL), a National Library of Australia (NLA) and a Commonwealth Archives Office (CAO). The Committee did consider the case for separating the FD. It is unclear whether any statement from O'Hara was tabled, but the final report echoes his concerns.⁸⁴ It noted the dissimilarity between film and orthodox librarianship, but concluded that it "did not wish to disturb a successful and worthwhile development" and enjoined the Library to "continue to develop its film activities" (paras 63- 66).⁸⁵ In its own submission, the Commonwealth Archives Committee (CAC) argued that films and sound recordings "varies from the normal treatment of both libraries and archives" and that their placement "is a matter of convenience only".⁸⁶ White opposed the partition of his empire. Although he lost the larger argument, he managed to retain the FD.⁸⁷

In the early 1950s, FD head Larry Lake and his successor Rod Wallace revived the search for early film. Working at night in his own time, Rod Wallace wrote letters to

number. Neither Wallace nor other film staff held librarianship qualifications. They were made to feel their inferior status, and non-performing staff from elsewhere in the Library were regularly transferred to FD. It enjoyed the moral support of a large client base, and the parliamentary and bureaucratic contacts which accrued.

⁸⁴ As a new staff member of the NLA from 1968 onwards I learned that memory of O'Hara's bid, along with a doubt about whether films properly belonged in the NLA, persisted in the corporate mindset.

⁸⁵ Rod Wallace recalls with certainty that the additional words "for the time being" had been present at the end of para 66 in an earlier draft of the report, but these words had disappeared by the time it was printed. Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup. (reel 3 at 6.30)

⁸⁶ "Between the material for Archives and Libraries proper there lies a variety of material (such as films, sound recordings.....) which does not automatically belong to either. Like archives it arises from transactions, but its value does not lie in its being evidence of those transactions, but in its content as an end-product. Its treatment varies from the normal treatment of both archives and libraries. Its control.... is a matter of convenience only.in the interests of economy, efficiency and convenience, the whole of any such subdivision (e.g. all films, whether Government or non-Government) should be kept together." Paton, Paton Committee. p 46

⁸⁷ It is indicative of White's style that he overplayed his bid to be a member of the Paton committee. The Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department, A S Brown, noted on file: "The President spoke again about the desirability of Mr White being on the [Paton Committee] and he repeated the usual arguments. I said that if I ever had any doubts about the desirability of Mr White being on the Committee I was now firmly convinced in the view that he should not. I had never seen such lobbying indulged in by any man to get himself into a position to influence a decision in his own favour. I believed that it was quite an unsound principle to have a man, to all intents and purposes, one of the judges in his own case and I felt that Mr White's own actions had been shown how undesirable it would be in this case. Personally, I would have no confidence in the Committee's recommendations if Mr White was a member." Quoted in Piggott, "The Visit of Dr T R Schellenberg to Australia."

town clerks and fire brigades, and others likely to encounter nitrate films.⁸⁸ For more than a decade it would be a lone crusade.⁸⁹ He and Lake had been encouraged by the delivery of two boxes of nitrate film which had survived a fire in Melbourne.⁹⁰ While a modest but steady stream of material was acquired, contemporary attitudes were unhelpful.⁹¹ The search coincided with a low ebb in post-war film production, and a moribund feature film industry.⁹² It would take time for the effect of television and a nascent film culture to lead towards the renaissance of the 1970s.⁹³

⁸⁸ Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

⁸⁹ It was a "Cinderella" activity. During this period some of Australia's most important silent classics, such as *On Our Selection* (1920) and *The Kid Stakes* (1920) were located. Wallace, "The Film Division - Past, Present and Future," vol.

⁹⁰ This is folk memory. It may have been part of the original stock of the NHFR or it may have been related to the production of the celebratory jubilee film *Cavalcade of Australia* by the National Film Board. The boxes included the *Naming of Canberra* in 1913, the *1901 Royal Visit*, and the *Opening of Parliament* in 1927, which tallies with the surviving reference to the content of the NHFR collection. Also included was a print of Raymond Longford's feature film *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919). Wallace's recollection differs, but within his long interview his own recollections become inconsistent. Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

⁹¹ Wallace recalled "In the 1950s Harold White put on a great 'do' to get all those film moguls to become friends of the film archive. Culmination of the event was a film screening of a couple of historical films that we had preserved. This was held in an extremely luxurious theatre in a lane off George St., Sydney....I was put through a quite unnecessary trauma by the projectionists but managed to talk everyone into projecting the films.... anyway, all the moguls were enjoying whiskies from the theatre bar as they sat in full size lounge chairs! Well, we got through the first feature (*The Romance of Runnibede* – Australian made). The lights went on, a deathly silence ensued and then a well-known mogul said 'Well, I know where that belongs, don't you, Bill'. To which Bill replied 'too bloody right, the tip'. A murmur of assent arose from the rest of the dozen or so moguls present. Harold White then did a spirited defence of film archives. This was accompanied by surreptitious smiles between most of the audience. I've never forgiven those two-faced people especially as at least three of them jumped on the bandwagon years later and made out they were ardent believers in film archives! Letter from Rod Wallace to Allan Fleming, 29 October 1991. Fleming papers NLA: MS 9862

Wallace's successor as FD head in 1965, Charles Gilbert, added: "In the early days of this gathering of early Australian films, most people, not necessarily beyond the four walls of the Library, thought Rod and I were soft in the head wanting to preserve such 'rubbish'." Brian Jeffrey, "[the Beginnings of a National Film Archive]," Walkabout July 1973.

⁹² Wallace and his colleagues resorted to subterfuge to ensure vital material was not destroyed. In 1962, a large consignment of nitrate film, including the original negatives of Ken G Hall's seventeen feature films of the 1930s, was transferred to the Film Division from Cinesound Productions in Sydney. This was without the knowledge of Cinesound's and, almost certainly, the NLA's management. The instigators were Anthony Buckley, then supervising editor of the Cinesound Review newsreel and, probably, Rod Wallace. In fact, Buckley's entertaining account cites **me** as his "partner in crime". As I did not join the NLA until six years later I must plead innocence! Buckley would later become a major player in the revival of the Australian film industry, and a significant player in the NFSA's story. Anthony Buckley, Behind a Velvet Light Trap: A Filmmaker's Journey from Cinesound to Cannes (Melbourne: Hardie Grant Books, 2009).

⁹³ Despite notable finds, the NLA's efforts were sometimes too little, too late. There were serious losses because its response was too slow, as in the case of the entire work of silent film director Franklyn Barrett. In the rescue and reconstruction of the classic *The Kid Stakes* (1927) by the Sydney University Film Group, the NLA had to be publicly shamed into funding a preservation copy.

Within the NLA, Wallace, Charles Gilbert and their colleagues had to defend the cost of film purchase and copying, which compared unfavourably with the cost of books and serials. This led to regrettable economies and unsound technical decisions. The storage of flammable nitrate film was always a practical problem⁹⁴. The gulf they had to bridge is illustrated in the fate of much of the nitrate film collection.⁹⁵ What today seems unconscionable vandalism, permanently impoverishing the film heritage, was at the time a response by FD to a managerial and economic dilemma. Further, FD's marginalisation was a disadvantage in internal politics.⁹⁶ By the mid 1960s, Wallace's search for Australia's missing silent and early sound films, which lacked the support of NLA management, together with the Historical Collection, as it was now known, was seen by hard-pressed staff as a distraction from the core business of film lending.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ The 35mm nitrate film collection was housed in a sequence of makeshift homes. Conventional wisdom held that nitrate had a limited life and had to be copied onto acetate film for the content to survive. By reduction copying to 16mm and destruction of the nitrate original, the storage problem was eliminated. With limited funds one could copy twice as much nitrate. Despite significant loss in picture quality, the NLA considered it an acceptable compromise (Wallace, "The Film Division - Past, Present and Future," vol.) and, over time, seemed to come to terms with it. (Wallace, [Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup](#).) Early in my employment, I questioned the practice. Gilbert told me that I needed to be philosophical about it. Australian films (he instanced Ken Hall's *Dad Rudd MP*) were generally bad and embarrassing, and no one would ever want to see them again on 35mm. A 16mm copy was sufficient as a record. *Dad Rudd M P* is now considered a classic and one of Hall's best films, and is fortunately available and still screened on 35mm.

⁹⁵ Shortly after I joined the Film Division in 1968 I was drawn into an arbitrary culling exercise which, in the space of a few hours, reduced the nitrate collection of some 2,500 cans to a residual 850. The rest were sent to the local rubbish tip. My contribution was keeping an eagle eye on the can labels passing me in the human chain, and trying to stop as many as possible from being thrown away. The original intention of sending the residual collection for copying to 16mm and subsequent destruction was abandoned as a result of apparent political manoeuvring. Senator Douglas McClelland's remarkably well informed speech (Senate Hansard, 9 April 1970, p 736-738) and responses to his questions on notice (Senate Hansard, 25 August 1970, pp 168-169 and 31 March 1971, p 2349) eloquently assert the case for adequate funding and proper archival standards, which then, as now, included the retention of nitrate originals. I had already been dispatched to Sydney to find accommodation for the nitrate film, which proved to be a bunker at the Munitions Filling Factory, St Marys.

⁹⁶ This mood was exacerbated when, in 1968, the Division vacated its friendly shop front at 113 London Circuit, Civic and moved into the new National Library building. Its austere corner on the third floor conspicuously lacked the sumptuous fit-out of other reading rooms and public areas. It was at the furthest possible distance from the public entrance, and borrowers now collected their films from the unprepossessing despatch bay in the bowels of the NLA, remote from FD staff.

⁹⁷ I recall this sentiment strongly expressed by staff during my early days at the NLA, when I was responsible for the Film Lending Collection.

The first connection with FIAF was made by former FD head Larry Lake, then serving as the NLA's liaison officer in London. At the FIAF congress in October 1957, held in Antibes, he presented a paper on the *Film activities of the Commonwealth National Library*. It describes the "threefold" collections comprising (a) 16mm prints available to borrowers, and negatives for making prints for the state film libraries (b) films "designed to illustrate the origin and development of the film both technically and as a means of artistic expression" together with the Taussig collection of film stills (c) a collection "designed to illustrate the development of the film in Australia, and to reflect aspects of Australian life and achievement."⁹⁸ Lake makes no distinction between the 'archival' and 'distribution' elements of the FD; they are intertwined. Lake's report on the congress refers to documents distributed during the proceedings which make it

....possible to gain a good idea of the programme of work carried out in each archive and of the way in which archives assist each other through FIAF. It will be noted that there is great similarity in the national programmes which usually comprise most or, for the bigger organisations all, of the following elements...⁹⁹

Encouraged by FIAF President Jerzy Toeplitz and Ernest Lindgren, Curator of the British National Film Archive, the FD joined FIAF as a provisional member in 1959. On an overseas trip for other reasons in 1965, Wallace managed to meet Lindgren and see his archive – an opportunity he was never afforded again.¹⁰⁰ Wallace's influence as a strategic thinker and an inspirational figure continued until his retirement in 1977.

⁹⁸ The paper is in the Lake papers NLA: MS 8324 Box 14.

⁹⁹ The elements include collection building, the 'preservation of original 35mm prints or negatives in proper film vaults', the copying of original films to ensure permanency and availability, definitive cataloguing, public screenings, collection of stills, posters and other documents for research and exhibition, collection of film equipment of historical interest including cameras, projectors, sets, costumes and film music, literature about film, and the production of publications'. Lake's description is fulsome. Lake papers: NLA MS 8324 Box 14

¹⁰⁰ Wallace's trip had been funded by an American organisation. He was recalled early by Harold White to take up the role of Coordinator of Special Collections, which included FD as well as the Pictorial, Maps and other areas. Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

3.1.3 NEW HOME, NEW TIMES

As the 1970s began, the NLA was to find its stewardship of what I will now call, for ease of discussion, the National Film Archive (NFA) put under increasing scrutiny. The FD had become a full member of FIAF in 1962¹⁰¹, but had failed to live up to both obligations and expectations. In 1969 the NLA was made emphatically aware of this in a lengthy letter to Harold White from FIAF Deputy President Lindgren, who had just returned from an Executive meeting where the NLA was discussed:

...our Secretary General has had complaints from film enthusiasts in Australia that you were not sufficiently meeting their needs...whereas the money available for buying books and other items of interest to your Library in London seems to be unlimited, your film work was starved of funds. I have had similar complaints from our other contacts in your continent over a considerable period of time. There seems to be a feeling among the people in Australia who really care for the art of the film, and are anxious to promote it, that the National Library is failing to provide the material they want.... [FIAF] feels that your National Library ...is one of its least active and least interested members. On numerous occasions [I have] expressed to you my deep regret that no member of the staff of your film archive department ¹⁰² has ever attended a FIAF meeting...we are beginning to think... that we ought to encourage instead the membership of some other organisation in Australia.

We all...have a sense of vocation. We have absolutely no contact with anyone in the National Library who has the same sense of vocation and we regret this very much. ...Neither I, nor my FIAF colleagues, are even sure at any moment who is our opposite number in your organisation....nearly all the letters I receive are signed by yourself,¹⁰³ although I know that as the National Librarian you cannot possibly have the time to deal with the detailed work of the film side.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ After standard probation of three years. Full membership conferred exclusivity within the national territory, so until rules changed in 1967, no other Australian body could join FIAF or deal with its members without FD's agreement.

¹⁰² The NLA's staff allocation for NFA work – i.e. zero – compared with the British National Film Archive's staff of 39. Even the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and the ABC claimed a combined total of 6 staff devoted to film archive work. (Senate Hansard, 25 August 1970, pp 168-169) Other comparisons were Czechoslovakia 37, Denmark 24, Cuba 22, Italy 13, Canada 11. Wallace, "The Film Division - Past, Present and Future," vol. - June 1969 figures.

¹⁰³ During White's incumbency, *all* letters from the Film Division carried the signature block 'H L White, National Librarian' as well as the written signature 'H L White'. This made FD staff completely anonymous. An example of this effect is in Quentin Turnour, "A.K.A. 'Home of the Blizzard': Fact and Artefact in the Film on the Australian Antarctic Expedition, 1922-1914 " NFSA Journal 2.4 (2007). Most, if not all, the correspondence Turnour attributes to White would have been written by Rod Wallace. Turnour also provides a detailed insight into the consequences of the FD's limited preservation expertise around 1960. In the introduction to Remarkable Occurrences Peter Cochrane notes that "all letters of import" from the NLA were in White's name.

Lindgren's letter promptly disappeared from its official file.¹⁰⁵

Post-war, FIAF had greatly expanded. Its members had been building substantial, well staffed and technically sophisticated film archive institutions. By comparison, the NLA had done very little. The FD lacked the most basic equipment and technical expertise, and was still dominated by its lending operation. While under FIAF rules¹⁰⁶ it was always the NLA's film archive, however defined and named, rather than the NLA itself, that held FIAF membership, it was clear to Lindgren that the FD was not developing the knowledge and activities expected of an archive and that its membership was in danger. It rarely submitted annual reports. Judged against Larry Lake's description of FIAF members' activities and standards in 1957 (above), the FD's archival activities were minimal at best, and its policy of copying 35mm nitrate film down to 16mm and then destroying it directly contradicted both the practice and the spirit of FIAF standards. It is not known whether other FIAF archives were aware that this was normal practice for its Australian member.

Meanwhile, little had happened in the field of sound recordings, which were an integral part of the NHFR, and of the post-war vision for the FD. Since the 1930s, radio networks, with their syndicated programs and national celebrities, had become part of Australia's

¹⁰⁴ Lindgren continues: "...it will be difficult, if not impossible, for you to succeed by delegating [film work] ...to members of your staff whose interests and qualifications ...are bookish rather than filmic, and expect to obtain your expertise from outside bodies like FIAF and its members. I sense.... there is more specialised knowledge of the cinema and the way to deal with it outside the National Library rather than inside it....it should be the other way around....Sooner or later the Australia will have to...develop a first class national film collection with its own expert staff, whether this is done within the National Library or outside it. If the National Library is to build up within itself the future Australian national film archive, if you are to get full value from your FIAF membership, and if you are to meet the growing criticisms in Australia that reach my ears, a 'bowing acquaintance' is no longer sufficient. Someone will have to plunge in up to his neck." Letter dated 28 October 1969.

¹⁰⁵ Rod Wallace and Charles Gilbert had anticipated this, so before sending the file to White they made a photocopy of the letter. A subsequent letter from Lindgren, dated 13 February 1970, indicates that he was still hoping for a reply.

¹⁰⁶ Following its 1969 congress, FIAF promulgated a statement on the degree of autonomy required for film archives that are part of larger organisations. This included a distinctive title, and being represented in FIAF dealings by its own officers. The NLA did not meet any of the six main requirements. FIAF, "Statement on FIAF Membership," (1969).

everyday life. For millions of listeners, radio schedules structured the day, and in the 1970s the small transistor sets took its presence everywhere. Sound recordings were ubiquitous and record and tape players were increasingly portable. They were at least as common in Australian homes as books, but the NLA had not caught up with this evolution. The advent of television in 1956 soon fundamentally changed the nature of radio programming, so that the once ubiquitous Australian-produced dramas, serials and variety programs, dating back to the 1930s, were now a thing of the past. The huge network transcription libraries where they reposed became redundant. With no archive to receive them, their holdings of discs and tapes began to be dumped in huge quantities.¹⁰⁷

In 1971 an Australian branch of the International Association of Music Libraries (IAML), from whence the International Association of Sound Archives (IASA) had emerged in 1969, was established. It formed a backdrop to the creation of the NLA's Music Section in August 1973. The serious collecting of sheet music by the NLA, as an aspect of Australiana, had begun in 1968, and in the wider arts ferment of the time the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services (AACOBS) proposed that as well as a National Music Archive there should also be a separate National Archive of Recorded Sound, including film music. In 1971 Peter Burgis was engaged as a consultant, and in 1974 he joined the staff of the Music Section as a sound recording specialist. From 1980 he would head a clearly identified Sound Recording unit or section (SR).¹⁰⁸

Changes in the social, political and policy landscape which would ultimately affect the NFA and SR were gathering. Television encouraged local production¹⁰⁹ but gradually

¹⁰⁷ Reputedly, Sydney's Warringah Expressway was built using the radio heritage as road fill.

¹⁰⁸ Robyn Holmes, "Musical Dialogues," Remarkable Occurrences, ed. Peter Cochrane (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001).

¹⁰⁹ Initially television commercials, local drama and variety programs. The airing of overseas-produced commercials was banned. As picture theatres closed, so eventually did the weekly cinema newsreel, which ended in 1975. Since about 1910, newsreels had been the one fixed point in the fluctuating fortunes of the Australian film industry, and had won the country its first "Oscar". Australian Capital Television, The Australian Image, 1988. Episode "Hot from the spot to the screen."

closed¹¹⁰ most of Australia's cinemas, ending the traditional weekly visit to 'the pictures'.¹¹¹ The Australian Film Institute (AFI), with its award system to encourage Australian film production, was established in 1958. Film festivals and the film society movement, after a modest start, were gathering strength, assisted in part by what I will now, for convenience, call the NLA's National Film Lending Collection (NFLC). The National Film Theatre network (NFTA) was fully operational by 1968. The Vincent Report¹¹² had urged expansion of Australian film and television production, and in 1968 the Australian Film Council, led by such advocates as John McCallum, Anthony Buckley and Phillip Adams, was formed to pursue this call on behalf of the film industry as a whole. The Film and Television Committee¹¹³ of the Australian Council for the Arts recommended the establishment of a national film and television school, an Australian Film and Television Development Corporation and an experimental film fund.¹¹⁴

The Gorton government acted on all these recommendations.¹¹⁵ In 1973, the Tariff Board enquiry tackled the issue of overseas control of film distribution and exhibition networks, traditionally antithetical to the promotion of Australian productions, and recommended the creation of a statutory Australian Film Authority to manage distribution and provide financial support for production¹¹⁶. On a broader canvas, the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections, otherwise known as the

¹¹⁰ "In 1957, the year after television was introduced, cinema attendance in Victoria alone plummeted by 5 million admissions. By 1959 an estimated 28 per cent of Sydney cinemas had closed, along with 33 per cent of Melbourne hard tops." D Collins, Hollywood Down Under: Australians at the Movies - 1896 to the Present Day (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1986). pp 226-229

¹¹¹ Yet by recycling vast numbers of old American and British movies, television gave a new generation a window on film history and contributed, in the long run, to a heightened awareness of archival issues.

¹¹² Australia. Parliament.Senate. Select Committee on the encouragement of Australian productions for television, Report (1963).

¹¹³ Later the Film, Radio and Television Board (FRTB)

¹¹⁴ Buckley, Behind a Velvet Light Trap. pp125-128 recounts the active political ferment of this time.

¹¹⁵ The Australian Film Development Corporation was established in 1970 and was superseded by the Australian Film Commission (AFC) in 1975. The Australian Film and Television School (later the Australian Film, Television and Radio School) began in 1973.

¹¹⁶ Ina Bertrand, ed., Cinema in Australia: A Documentary History (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1989).

Pigott Committee, reported in 1975.¹¹⁷ The decade would end with the first UNESCO instrument recommending international standards for moving image archiving.¹¹⁸

During the 1960s, access demand for the NFA, defined as embracing the 'Historical Collection' and other materials, such as the Taussig film stills collection, that were not an operational part of the NFLC, had been spasmodic. However, pioneering scholars and enthusiasts such as Barrie King, Chris Collier, Ross Cooper and Andrew Pike had established a connection. Anthony Buckley's *Forgotten Cinema* (1966) and the Alan Anderson-Joan Long documentary *The Pictures that Moved* (1968) were heavily based on the NFA collection, and publicly opened the door to a cinematic heritage that perhaps few Australians then remembered. As the NFA activity grew and developed mechanisms for handling access requests, albeit without dedicated staff until 1973, it would take on larger tasks such as servicing major commercial television series¹¹⁹. It essayed an entrepreneurial approach, publicising its activities and its 'finds' and organising screenings.

Most of the NFA's burgeoning clientele were commercial organisations, such as television and radio networks, film and television producers and distributors. Typically, they sought footage segments from films or television productions, copies of photographic stills or posters, or of other collection items. Since the NLA rarely controlled copyright, the client had to first obtain proof of permission from the copyright owner. The NFA would then arrange for the selected material to be copied to order.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections, *Museums in Australia 1975* (Canberra: 1975).

¹¹⁸ UNESCO, "Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images," (1980)

¹¹⁹ The thirty nine episodes of Peter Luck's top rating compilation documentary television series *This Fabulous Century* (1979) being a case in point.

¹²⁰ A fee-for-service for the copying work applied, but did not compensate for staff time. This preceded the era of 'cost recovery' in the Australian Public Service. Lacking copyright ownership, the NLA almost never shared in the lucrative aspect of its activities. The collecting of royalties was negotiated between copyright owner and client, before the NFA was authorised to service the request. In principle, the NFA could have also have levied a royalty charge for

At the beginning of the decade, the NFA's modest collection comprised around 4000 film and television titles, 35,000 film stills, 1000 film posters and sundry other items. Most of the titles were of pre-1960 Australian origin, but television material included a run of the ABC's current affairs program *Four Corners*. Since its relocation to St Mary's, the nitrate component had more than doubled in size to 2000 reels.¹²¹ To document the detailed growth of the NFA collection is outside the scope of this project, but the Cinesound Movietone acquisition is illustrative of its dynamics.

The agreement forged in 1971 between the NLA and the owners of the Cinesound Movietone nitrate newsreel collection¹²², under which two thousand reels of nitrate film would be copied over four years for addition to the NFA at a cost to the NLA of \$200,000, was a major step in its collection growth. It was celebrated with due ceremony at the time, and in later years National Librarian Allan Fleming remembered the achievement with pride.¹²³

Certainly the symbolism and public recognition it afforded was important. But the project also demonstrated how utterly ill-equipped the NFA was to cope with such an exercise, and how unpractised the NLA was in conducting the kind of well-informed, hard-nosed negotiations that were normal in business environments like the film industry. Under the agreement, NLA paid for making safety acetate copies of the Cinesound Movietone nitrate library, through the company's associated laboratory,

public domain material, which later, as an independent entity, it did. But such a charge would have contravened NLA policy on free public access. The commercial value of the NFA collection belonged almost entirely to third parties, free to charge whatever the market would bear. The same logic applied to SR.

¹²¹ Figures from memory and Edmondson, *A Study Tour of Film Archives in England, Europe and the U.S.A.*.. Figures in the NLA's annual reports are sketchy and do not always separate the NFA from the NFLC.

¹²² Mostly the 35mm nitrate negatives of weekly issues of *Cinesound Review* and *Australian Movietone News* up to 1951, when the industry converted to triacetate film.

¹²³ Letter from Allan Fleming to Warren Horton 14 Oct 91, amongst other references in his papers. Fleming papers NLA: MS 9862

Colorfilm. The company retained copyright and possession of its library, and continued to derive revenue from it. It was an excellent deal for Cinesound Movietone, as the NLA effectively provided it with free insurance against collection loss, and Colorfilm profited from the high volume of copying work. Moreover, the company insisted the copies be 35mm, not the reduction 16mm copies which were still the norm for NFA.

In practice, the copying was organised by the company librarian, and a box containing a dozen or so cans of film would arrive every week in Canberra. With no staff to unpack, inspect and accession the new copies, no equipment on which to view the reels and check quality, and no inventory to check them against, the boxes accumulated unopened. It would take years to clear and analyse the backlog, and determine that most of the copies were poorly executed. In fact, most of the \$200,000 was wasted. The NLA not only did not then have the expertise to run such a project, but it did not *understand* that it did not. Copying old film was not as simple as buying collections of books or microfilms.¹²⁴ The whole exercise had to be repeated, in an entirely different context, by the NFSA from 1988 onwards.¹²⁵ At the time, though, the project did have the lasting benefit of moving the NFA decisively back on to the 35mm standard.

Until 1973 the NFA had no dedicated staff, so it did not appear on the NLA's organisation chart,¹²⁶ but there was a collection¹²⁷ if not a fixed name. At some

¹²⁴ Archival copying of old, shrunken nitrate film calls on expert film examination and repair skills, careful selection, matching and cleaning of the original elements, the use of specialised film printers adapted to shrunken material, and checking the quality of the new copy against the original. It is slow and expensive. At the time these possibilities were available overseas, but not in Australia. Rather, the hard-pressed Cinesound Movietone librarian, being paid no extra for the additional work, retrieved the material for copying, without preparation. He sent it to the laboratory which, in turn, made uncorrected copies on unsuitable rapid-throughput machines, because the rock-bottom rates it was paid made any other approach uneconomic. When a NFA staffer finally examined the reels, in some cases three or four years later, and without access to the nitrate originals for comparison, it was far too late to complain to the laboratory.

¹²⁵ *Operation Newsreel* was funded by a \$4 million sponsorship from the owners of the Cinesound Movietone material, and this time included the donation to the NFSA of the original nitrate elements.

¹²⁶ The fact that the NFA, not the NLA, was the FIAF member was a distinction generally ignored by, and perhaps meaningless to, the NLA. In a memo to Rod Wallace on 30 Nov 1970, I pointed out that the NFA did not meet this, or other, tests of autonomy laid down by FIAF, including having a distinctive name and letterhead. FIAF later asserted these rules at its 1977 congress when it refused voting rights for the NLA's representative, Ivan Page, who was its European liaison officer, on the grounds that he was not, as the rules required, a director or curator of the

indefinable point the *Film Division* had become the *Film Collection and Services* or just the *Film Collection*, as well as being popularly known as the *National Film Library*.¹²⁸

During Harold White's tenure as National Librarian (1947-70) the NLA grew, along with Canberra itself, from a small and scattered entity to a major institution with an iconic building. Under Allan Fleming (1970-74)¹²⁹ the Special Collections area expanded, including, finally, the formal establishment of a dedicated NFA staff unit in 1972¹³⁰ and the Music Section in 1973¹³¹. The Minister was asked for funding assistance to develop both the NFLC and the NFA¹³² as the latter started to flesh out its staff complement during 1973, initially seven positions, later reduced to five.

At the same time, to conform to Library orthodoxy the term 'archive' was officially discouraged and reference to the National Library's Historical Film or Historical Television Collections, or variations on that theme, was favoured, if not always consistently. Nevertheless, to staff and supporters, and in internal documentation, it

archive, nor did he hold a responsible post within it. See letter from Sec Gen Jacques Ledoux 25 April 1977. According to the head of the FD, Charles Gilbert, by world standards the NFA was not an archive (NLA Continuing Education Programme paper #21, undated, c. 1970)

¹²⁷ As at November 1968, the NFA collection comprised 2,230 titles, mostly 16mm, on triacetate film; an estimated 2 million feet of 35mm nitrate film as reported to FIAF in 1970; the Taussig collection of film stills and a small quantity of other related material such as press clippings. It was partly accessioned but entirely uncatalogued (Source: unsigned and undated document headed 'Historical Film Collection') By 1970 these figures had increased, as already mentioned above.

¹²⁸ The 'National Film Library' tag began early: it is used in a report in the Canberra Times of 29 July 1947 (p 2) of a talk about the National Film Board presented by John O'Hara, styled as "film officer attached to the National Library".

¹²⁹ Allan Fleming is the only head of the National Library to date who was *not* a professional librarian. Among other things he relaxed protocols for correspondence, which allowed individual staff members to actually identify themselves as the authors of the letters they wrote.

¹³⁰ I was appointed to head the new NFA Unit (Librarian Class 2) reporting to the head of FD (Librarian Class 3). The unit comprised mostly base-grade librarians with no film background who, like me, learned on the job. At that level, they were nominally subject to the policy of rotation around various parts of the NLA at approximately nine month intervals. In my first years at the NLA I had successfully resisted being rotated.

¹³¹ The Public Service Board refused to create separate music and sound sections, instead subordinating sound to music, and setting the scene for future friction.

¹³² Letter from Allan Fleming to Minister McLelland, 19 September 1973

remained the 'archive'. By 1977, under Fleming's successor, George Chandler (1974-80), the style 'National Film Archive' had won out as the formal name, while the Film Collection and Services Section was re-styled the 'National Film Library', its traditional colloquial label. Sound recordings were included in the 'National Music Library'. This conformed to the nomenclature which George Chandler applied throughout the NLA, which he restructured into named subject libraries, each beginning with the word 'national'.

VARYING NAMES ¹³³	Year
National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library	1935 -
Film Division	1945 -
National Film Library (colloquial)	c 1940s-
Historical [film] Collection	c 1960s
Film Collection and Services	c 1968 -
National Library's Historical Film/Television Collections	c 1973 -
National Film Collection Film Archive	1973
Music section (including sound recordings)	1973
National Music Library (including Sound Recording Collection)	1976
National Film Library (official) including Film Archive	1976
National Music Library and Sound Recordings Unit	1977-
National Film Library including National Film Archive	1977-
National Music Library and Sound Recording Unit	1980-
Sound Recording Section	1982-84
Film Section including National Film Archive	1982-84

¹³³ The latter part of the table is taken from annual reports, the rest from other sources. Constantly changing nomenclature reflects changing internal orthodoxies.

Lacking any significant collection or accumulated relationships from early years, SR had started well behind the NFA, and did not become an identifiable staff unit until 1977. It had inherited an existing group of about 1500 recordings; and in 1973 the great leap forward began. Rod Wallace recalled that active acquisition preceded the establishment of formal management in 1974. Acquisitions included, for example, some 27,000 AWA radio recordings saved just before they went to the tip.¹³⁴ Working to Music Section head Prue Neidorf, Peter Burgis pursued a rapid collection growth program, which had begun with the NLA's purchase of his private collection of 30,000 recordings. By 1976 the SR collection had almost reached the quarter-million mark. By 1983 it was over the half-million. Wallace had to resort to subterfuge, hiding some acquisitions off site to avoid frightening the NLA administration. This expansion was disturbing to Wallace's superior, Pauline Fanning, the head of Australian Collections area:

My objection [to it] was that if Burgis visited a gaol or a hospital he would see this mass of records, he wouldn't be worried about the condition they were in or what they were, he took them. His view, I know, was that he wanted to have perhaps half a dozen examples of a disc and then he would pick the best one..... I think he exceeded his charter, as it were. But maybe I'm prejudiced; I don't see that collecting records of 'I like Aeroplane Jelly' is in the same category as Cazneaux's photographs or Edmund Barton's papers.¹³⁵

This collection growth quickly outstripped the capacity of a tiny staff, reaching a maximum of only four positions by 1983, to make a serious impression on collection organisation, cataloguing or preservation work. Moreover, while the NLA was now back in the sound archiving business, as it had been in the 1930s, SR would never have a direct managerial link with the NFA, even though both were part of the Australian Studies area of the NLA.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Establishment of the Music and Sound Recordings Section was announced on 8 May 1974. (NLA "For Information" sheet 23 May 1974); Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Holmes, "Musical Dialogues." Times change: when the NLA opened its permanent "Treasures" gallery in 2011, the Aeroplane Jelly song, already listed in the NFSA's Sounds of Australia Registry, was a centrepiece of the official proceedings.

¹³⁶ A practical affinity would develop but the two would never be joined until both left the National Library in 1984.

3.1.4 FIAF AND THE EDMONDSON REPORT

During an overseas trip in 1972, Allan Fleming visited film archives in Japan, Belgium and Britain, and conferred with Ernest Lindgren and FIAF Secretary General Jacques Ledoux. He learned that the NLA was in bad odour, and promised Lindgren that he would send Rod Wallace or “an appropriate film expert” to a FIAF congress every three years.¹³⁷ He gathered from Lindgren that Professor Jerzy Toeplitz, who had visited the NLA in early February, was highly regarded. Toeplitz had been a long-time FIAF president, had since moved to a Melbourne university, and was now the founding principal of the new Australian Film and Television School (AFTS). Fleming was thinking ahead about how the NLA should accommodate Toeplitz’s presence in Australia “in case he brought in more than was comfortable from our point of view.”¹³⁸ In the event, it was not Rod Wallace but the new head of FD, Ted Vellacott¹³⁹, who was

¹³⁷ From a transcript of Allan Fleming’s report of his 1972 trip. He subsequently advised Jean Whyte that he and Council wished to be kept better informed: “I would like it to be registered again and known clearly that both I and the Council are positively interested in activities, progress and development of the National Film Collection...and would also like the rest of the Library to have an opportunity to take an interest in the film collection by being more widely informed.” (Fleming to Whyte 24 May 1973) NLA: MS 9862 Box 15

¹³⁸ “Toeplitz who visited us in Canberra, and who is, I think now at La Trobe University (or is it Monash) in charge of the Film Study or School Section, has obviously much prestige abroad. He was apparently a very successful president, who was able to achieve compromises which were quite difficult. I should think we should need to take account from the National Library point of view of his existence in Australia. We need to think about it rather than rush into it of course. Should we ask him up for a couple of days to consult so that the word would get around that he was assisting us. Or, if we did let him move in too much, could this become a bit of an embarrassment at a later stage in case he brought in more than was comfortable from our point of view.” Fleming papers NLA: MS 9862 Box 15

¹³⁹ Vellacott was a librarian with no film background. He worked continuously in the NLA Council Secretariat from 1968 to 1985, except for a period between 1973 and 1977 when he headed FD. His appointment in FD was confirmed about a month before he went to Moscow. It is not clear why Fleming did not send Rod Wallace, who would have been the logical choice. From Fleming’s papers (NLA: MS 9862) it is obvious that he and Wallace came to enjoy a friendship, and that Fleming trusted him. Between them in the hierarchy was Jean Whyte, head of Information, Reference and Research branch, who was instrumental in Vellacott’s appointment. Whyte’s diary, and my own observation at the time, suggests she regarded Vellacott as a protégé. Whyte papers NLA: MS 9616 “Jean had her favourites...those people she encouraged her favourites were usually young men.” Coralie E J Jenkin, Jean Primrose Whyte: A Professional Biography (Clayton: Monash University Information Technology, 2010). p 07.13

A year later, Whyte was still keen to establish Vellacott’s credentials. In a note about a proposed conference of film libraries, she felt the ground needed to be carefully prepared and should include “the establishment of Mr Vellacott in his position and the recognition by others that he knows about film librarianship...Mr Vellacott must visit all the states before the conference and see the film libraries and talk to the film librarians in each state...film staff must be able to hold their own amongst film people from the states.” (Jean Whyte to George Chandler, 27 May 1974) NLA: MS 9616 Box 2

Whyte left at the end of 1974, but retained a connection as the LAA representative on the NLA Council’s Advisory Committee in the Humanities from 1976 to 1982. In 1981 she was appointed to the NLA Council – its first librarian – on the proposal of Harrison Bryan, “perhaps in the hope of influencing the Council towards his views”. (Jenkin, Jean

sent at short notice to the Moscow FIAF congress, and on visits to archives in Europe and North America, in June 1973.¹⁴⁰ This happened immediately before I began my own long-foreshadowed study tour (below). This flurry of interest in FIAF would not be sustained.¹⁴¹

After unsuccessful bids for support elsewhere, in February 1973 I was successful in gaining AFTS agreement to fund my private five month study tour of FIAF member archives in Europe and North America, from July to December 1973.¹⁴² I had set up the new NFA unit and left one of my staff in charge during my absence.¹⁴³ The tour yielded considerable information that helped shape systems and practices in the NFA unit so that it could replicate, albeit on a much smaller scale, the functional division of labour

Primrose Whyte: A Professional Biography. P 07.6) Whyte considered she had been most successful in Films and Music, where she had not expected it. Jean Whyte to Alan Fleming, 3 Sep 1974 NLA; MS 9862

¹⁴⁰ NLA Council report 1098, 3 Aug 1973

¹⁴¹ Vellacott's trip seemed intended both to inform him and establish his credibility in FIAF as the NLA's senior film person, ahead of my arrival on the doorsteps of FIAF members in his wake. I doubt he achieved this. For example, at the Nederlands Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, I was received with suspicion until I overcame the decidedly negative impression Vellacott had made in Moscow on its curator, Jan de Vaal. In February I had suggested to Rod Wallace that the Moscow congress be added to my own itinerary, but this was not permitted. The NFA was not represented at FIAF again by its own staff until 1978, when, while privately in the UK, I was recalled to duty to attend the Brighton Congress.

¹⁴² When informing me of the outcome, Toeplitz told me that AFTS would cover the travel and other expenses, and that the NLA would be 'required' to pay my salary. I do not know whether the NLA willingly acquiesced in this arrangement. The NLA did specify that this was a 'private' trip, so overseas diplomatic posts would not be advised. Following questions raised by Fleming (to George Clark 22 May 1973 and Jean Whyte 6 July 1973. Whyte papers NLA: MS 9616 Box 2), I received a written instruction from Vellacott, immediately before I left, that since the NLA was supporting my trip, I was to submit a report from each stopover, commenting on specified aspects of the work of each archive I visited. "Perhaps you could send these reports to me in manuscript through the Australian diplomatic service. I will have them typed up so that they would be available on your return." (Memo Vellacott to Edmondson 18 July 1973). Preparing and mailing these reports at each stop was time consuming. They were never typed up, and Vellacott later told me he never read them. The MSS reports are filed in my personal papers.

¹⁴³ Ernest Lindgren had advised me on developing my itinerary. It included archives that had been visited by Rod Wallace and Barrie King in earlier years. The tour also included the first FIAF Summer School, held at the Staatliches Filmarchiv, East Berlin. Lindgren died in July 1973, before I had a chance to meet him. He was one of the architects of FIAF with its strong stance on autonomy, as his correspondence with Harold White indicates. So Fleming's account of his 1972 conversation with Lindgren seems dissonant: "Mr Lindgren made it pretty clear that he expects, in due course, although it may not be 'in his time', the film archives would become part of the British Library. So those who have suggested the reverse process in Australia seem really to be going against the times. The BFI apparently survives quite well, on Government Grants... the total staff is apparently round about 300, but of course it includes all sorts of activities not embraced in the National Library activities." (Fleming papers, NLA: MS 9862 Box 15) Ivan Butler paints a gloomier picture of a cash-strapped BFI of 230 staff in 1970 (Ivan Butler, 'To Encourage the Art of the Film': The Story of the British Film Institute (London: Hale, 1971). Lindgren may, by this time, have been a sick man, wondering what the future held for the archive he founded. Fleming, for his part, may have heard what he wanted to hear.

and skills followed in overseas archives. On return, my obligation was to submit a report to AFTS. While I was beginning to prepare this, Toeplitz¹⁴⁴ met with the NLA Council in February 1974 to discuss the Library's film activities. At Council's request he prepared his own account of the discussion for their benefit, urging, inter alia, a much greater degree of autonomy¹⁴⁵ for the NFA within the NLA structure. It was submitted to Council's May 1974 meeting, with a covering note explaining that Professor Toeplitz "uses the term 'film archive' in the sense of 'national historical film collection' – that is, in a sense compatible with the historical film activities of the National Film Collection."¹⁴⁶

In May 1974 a group of historians, teachers, critics and film makers wrote to the Prime Minister calling for the establishment of an independent film archive. The lengthy reply, drafted by or for Jean Whyte, is significant for its enunciation of the standard responses the NLA would use as the calls for autonomy grew in the years ahead. It suggests, instancing the creation of the British Library, that the world is moving towards the

¹⁴⁴ Toeplitz was the former head of the film school at Lodz, Poland, and a distinguished academic. He fell out of favour with the Communist authorities, and was invited to Australia when moves to establish AFTS were underway. Ken Myer, a member of the NLA Council since 1960, and future chairman (from August 1974), "was deeply interested in film for many years and was a willing financial supporter" for Toeplitz. Sue Ebury, Many Lives of Kenneth Myer (Melbourne: Milgunyah Press, 2008). p 418. See also Wolfgang Klaue, "Lest We Forget..." Journal of Film Preservation.81 (2009). and Ray Edmondson, "A Memory of Jerzy Toeplitz," Journal of Film Preservation.88 (2010).

¹⁴⁵ Toeplitz knew FIAF's stance on autonomy, reaffirmed in a 1981 FIAF statement which said, in part: "Members shall be autonomous, non-profit film archives working on a national level whether governmental or non-governmental, devoted to the history and aesthetics of the cinema, and accessible to the public. The members of the Federation shall have as the main object of their activity to collect, preserve and catalogue films and all documentation related to the film medium."

¹⁴⁶ NLA Council Report 1224, May 1974. Jean Whyte found Toeplitz's document disturbing: "I am extremely worried about Toeplitz's use of the word 'film archive' but I also know that Toeplitz is unlikely to agree that the term be altered and it would, I think, be very likely that a Council member may refer this report to Professor Toeplitz. What do you think we should do? The choices before us are, I think:- 1) Alter archives to historical collection or national collection throughout the Toeplitz paper, or 2) Leave the report as it is with the explanation given on page 1, or 3) Do not produce the report for this Council meeting but include it in the next lot of information papers." (Whyte to Dennis Richardson, 25 March 1974) NLA:MS 9616 Box 1

The "Council member" who Whyte thinks "may refer this report to Professor Toeplitz" was presumably Ken Myer. I did not see this report, or Toeplitz's paper, until many years later. While suggesting that Toeplitz's report be effectively censored and changed without his knowledge, Whyte was at the same time a professed opponent of censorship in libraries. She says she was "brought up" on John Metcalfe's "ringing statement" that "the proper attitude of the librarian and the library towards all opinion and knowledge should be that of the scientist and the scholar, themselves supposed to have no loyalty but to free enquiry and truth." (Whyte's 1988 paper on censorship NLA: Acc 02/171 Box 1. See also, Whyte to M J Ramsden, 5 Nov 1974 NLA:MS 9616 Box 1)

aggregation of specialist bodies into large institutions. It stoutly denies that the NLA is a book-centred organisation, and concludes:

It would not be possible for the National Library to carry out its statutory function to maintain and develop a national collection of library material, including a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Australia and the Australian people and to make this material available with a view to its most advantageous use in the national interest without the national film collection. This collection like the collections of books, pictures, photographs, sound recordings and manuscripts is part of the record of the nation's art, culture and history. The understanding of, and research into, that art, culture and history is facilitated by the fact that all the various forms of record are the responsibility of one institution.¹⁴⁷

My study tour report ¹⁴⁸ (which I will call, for convenience, the Edmondson report) was lodged with the AFTS in October 1974, after the NLA had unsuccessfully sought to influence its content.¹⁴⁹ It included a summary of film archive activity in Australia at that time. What I observed during the tour demonstrated that the NFA was working well below the standards and attainment of every archive I had visited, and I concluded that, if it was to be of international standard and scope, the NFA needed to develop to the levels I had seen overseas and operate with sufficient functional autonomy to meet reasonable FIAF standards. This could happen inside or outside the NLA, although on balance I favoured the latter. Given that need, a series of recommendations followed, embracing career structures, storage and technical facilities, collecting policy, user services in multiple locations, research and deposit legislation. NLA management never formally acknowledged receipt of my report, although Vellacott relayed to me the message that my recommendations had damaged my career. After the Minister had

¹⁴⁷ Letter to the Prime Minister from Ross Cooper, Andrew Pike, John C Murray, John Flaus, Jack Clancy and Harry Davidson, 24 May 1974. Whyte's draft response was sent to Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet under a note from George Chandler dated 11 July 1974, which says, in part: "Proposals similar to Mr Cooper's have been made in the past and have been answered in terms of the Library's performance and plans.....all the responsibilities mentioned [by Mr Cooper] are being carried out by the Library and... there are no new suggestions in Mr Cooper's letter". NLA: MS 9616 Box 2

¹⁴⁸ Edmondson, A Study Tour of Film Archives in England, Europe and the U.S.A. .

¹⁴⁹ Through Vellacott, the NLA sought to 'vet' the report before submission to AFTS. He was clearly acting on instructions. On advice from Toeplitz, who reminded me that the report was my personal accounting to AFTS, I refused this demand and, with Toeplitz's permission, provided NLA management and AFTS with copies simultaneously. I was unaware, of course, of Whyte's sensitivity to Toeplitz's paper (above) or, for that matter, her views about censorship.

requested a comment from the NLA on the Edmondson report, a précis which I had prepared for my private use and circulation to interested people was submitted to the Council, under cover of a commentary which, inter alia, said that my report was “misleading” and “not revelatory” and that its notions of autonomy were “based on an outmoded concept of a film archive” because the NLA itself was an autonomous statutory authority¹⁵⁰. NLA management seemed fixated on the issue of autonomy, which could not be achievable outside NLA in the short term, rather than on the more immediate practical and developmental concerns which I had identified.

The AFTS publicly released the Edmondson report. A condensed version appeared in *Cinema Papers*.¹⁵¹ It quickly fed into widening discussion on the NFA, and the Interim Board of the AFC invited me to make a submission on the issues arising from its recommendations.¹⁵² By now, concerned individuals had formed an advocacy group, the Association for a National Film and Television Archive (AFTA), which established a profile within the film community and called for the establishment of a properly resourced, autonomous archive.¹⁵³ One of its early actions was to lodge a submission

¹⁵⁰ Report 1382, 7 Feb 1975, prepared by Vellacott. He was recalled from leave to write the commentary, hence his unexplained reappearance at the time. It was prepared without my knowledge, nor was I informed that my report précis had been submitted to the NLA Council, which was by now under the chairmanship of Ken Myer. In later years I discovered both the Council report and Vellacott’s handwritten draft purely by chance. A used AFTS-deposited copy of the Edmondson report is now in the NLA collection, Bib ID 848586, and is available for general readers. It was not available to NLA staff at the time unless I provided copies myself.

¹⁵¹ Ray Edmondson, “The Edmondson Report: Film Archives,” *Cinema Papers*.4 (1974). Ross Cooper was commissioned to prepare his own précis of the Report with permission of AFTS, which holds copyright. This journal, and others like *Filmnews* and *Lumière*, helped create a climate for the discussion of film culture and archival issues.

¹⁵² My submission was sought and made in a private capacity and may, or may not, have fed into the drafting of the *Australian Film Commission Act 1975*. In any case the AFC’s subsequent interest in the NFA was consistent with the suggestions I put to them. I copied my submission simultaneously to the NLA.

¹⁵³ *Cinema Papers* (March-April 1975, p.85) published side-by-side letters from NLA Director-General, George Chandler, and AFTA offering contrasting views on my report as published in the previous issue.

with the Pigott Committee.¹⁵⁴ Another was to circulate a leaflet, *Films in Peril*, at the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals to call attention to its objectives.¹⁵⁵

Pressure on the NLA to develop its film study collection, a subset of the NFLC, as a borrowing resource for schools, tertiary media courses, film societies and related bodies gained new impetus in 1975 as the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council (FRTB) convened national meetings of stakeholders and work began on drawing up a 'core collection' of film titles.¹⁵⁶ This reflected the rapid changes in the educational field, the policy ferment arising from the establishment of AFTS, AFC, NFTA and other bodies, and the resulting revival of the film production industry. This growth in resources for studying the history and development of the cinema was context for the growing interest in the NFA.

By 1975, commentators were becoming aware of Australian Archives' (AA) own ambitions in film and sound archiving, and concerned about the potential for fracturing what they felt should be a coordinated task. The Department of the Special Minister of State called a meeting of stakeholders¹⁵⁷ 'to discuss the maximum utilization of film archives collections in Australia' at which AA declared it held a collection of 80,000 films and asserted "prime responsibility for ...all Australian government records [including] film material produced by Australian Government bodies."¹⁵⁸ The AFC and FRTB drew

¹⁵⁴ See its 1975 report, Chapter 13, recommendation 13.2. p 82: though not explicitly mentioned here, the idea of an autonomous national film archive would have been included in the "multiplicity" of specialist museums which the committee recommended against.

¹⁵⁵ This coincided with *Salute to Australian Film* at the 1975 Sydney Film Festival, probably the first ever major retrospective of Australian cinema, which drew heavily on the NFA collection. In due course, AFTA also achieved observer status in FIAF.

¹⁵⁶ Letter and attachments from FRTB 14 April 1975

¹⁵⁷ NLA, AA, AWM, ABC, AFC, AFTS, FRTB, Pigott Committee, Department of the Media, Special Minister of State, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ken G Hall, Keith Moremon. (Draft minutes 13 August 1975)

¹⁵⁸ Ostensibly AA's holdings were much larger than the NFA, though the basis of this figure is not detailed in the minutes. AA interpreted its mandate to include films produced by ABC and Film Australia, wartime government publicity films, films of scientific experiments from the Weapons Research Establishment and Navy Office. AA's position was now opposite to the one held by the CAO in 1957: "....in the interests of economy, efficiency and

attention to the Edmondson report, FIAF requirements and worrying “fragmentation in the field of film archives which causes confusion in the industry.” The NLA and AFC were urged to develop a publicity campaign to acquire old privately held film. In a separate discussion with AFTA, AA raised concerns about the use of the terms ‘film archive’ and ‘archives’ and their conceptual overtones.¹⁵⁹

3.1.5 AFC WORKING PARTY ON THE NFA

In 1975 the Australian Film Commission (AFC) succeeded the Australian Film Development Corporation¹⁶⁰ and soon activated its ‘archival’ clause. It convened a “meeting on film archival problems” on 14 September 1976¹⁶¹, comprising representatives of NLA, AA, AFTS and AFC, and chaired by AFC Commissioner Peter Martin, with an initial objective of presenting a working document to government around the end of the year. Inter alia, each organisation agreed to prepare a paper on its view of the development of the NFA over the next five years. When the group reconvened on 12 October, it became the *Working Party on the National Film Archive (WP)*¹⁶². In its five-year scenario, the AFC effectively challenged the NLA to demonstrate that it could accommodate the necessary evolution and functional autonomy of the NFA to justify its own stewardship of the entity, noting that “if it cannot be achieved within

convenienceall films, whether Government or non-Government, should be kept together.” *Report of the National Library enquiry committee 1956-57*, p 46

¹⁵⁹ Letter from Peter J Scott, AA to Graham Shirley, AFTA 7 Oct 1975

¹⁶⁰ Its brief - to rationalise government support for the promotion, production, distribution and exhibition of Australian films - was based on the recommendations of the Tariff Board enquiry (1973). The Act contained a clause empowering it “to encourage, whether by the provision of financial assistance or otherwise, the keeping of films in archives in Australia” Section 5 (1) (d). See also Senate Hansard, 5 October 1976 p 245. Anthony Buckley, Phillip Adams, Andrew Pike and Tom Jeffrey were among those whose presence, at various times, on the boards of the AFC, AFTS and other government bodies helped to maintain pressure on the NLA and develop a consistent climate of support for the NFA. The NFA also figured in the ALP Arts policy for the recent election, so the issues were not new to them.

¹⁶¹ Minutes of the meeting.

¹⁶² But not immediately. The initial title was the *Working Party on Film Archive* [sic] although it was soon clear that the AFC’s objective was to strengthen the NFA.

the Library, the Archive's future must remain clouded, and the alternative of separate development would appear desirable, if not inevitable."¹⁶³ It also raised the question of whether Sydney would be a more practical location than Canberra. To objections voiced by the NLA¹⁶⁴, Martin responded that problems of the film industry's confidence in the NLA, whether based on fact or not, still had to be taken account of.

The WP took a wide ranging look at issues of preservation, access, cataloguing, legal deposit, management systems, acquisition, sharing of storage and systems, cooperation generally, and more contentious topics such as NFA autonomy¹⁶⁵. To encourage NFA acquisition, the AFC surveyed film and television producers and encouraged voluntary deposit of their backlogs. In October 1977 it introduced a contractual requirement that AFC-funded productions be deposited in the NFA¹⁶⁶. Anticipating the introduction of its own enabling legislation, AA was careful to reserve its position on many matters, and only limited common ground was found with NFA on practical issues¹⁶⁷. The AFC was more forthright, and in one of its papers¹⁶⁸ made a particular comment on the risks inherent in the NFA's staffing situation, pointing out how heavily the NFA depended on a few dedicated staff, whose specialisation restricted their promotional opportunities. The loss of even one or two would mean the loss of much accumulated knowledge. Serious morale problems were arising from pressure of work and comparison with the situation of peers overseas.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ "The National Film Archive – a five year target plan". AFC paper for the meeting on 12 Oct 1976

¹⁶⁴ NLA Director General George Chandler, on reading the minutes of the second meeting, expressed concern about the trend of discussion.

¹⁶⁵ Which AFTS supported, NLA opposed and on which AA had doubts. In the end, there was agreement to disagree.

¹⁶⁶ Advice 27 Oct 1977

¹⁶⁷ For example, standardised film can labelling and management systems. At this stage, AA had repositories for storage but very little technical equipment, dedicated staffing or expertise in audiovisual archiving. On all counts, it had significantly less than NFA, by my own observation.

¹⁶⁸ AFC paper for 4th meeting, 25 Nov 1976

¹⁶⁹ In March 1974, Karen Foley asked to be excused from the rotation program for base grade librarians because she wanted to stay in the NFA. Jean Whyte responded that "the rotation scheme enables those in it to learn

Despite the hope of a prompt outcome, it took until July 1979 for the parties to agree on the final text of the report, and even after that to add addenda. It was a measured document, containing a wealth of information, some fifteen practical recommendations and proposals for additional funding.¹⁷⁰ Areas of disagreement, such as NFA autonomy, were noted but not pursued. In April 1980, the report was presented to NLA Council with the covering comment that many of the recommendations had been “started or effected” and that it would be inappropriate to press the Minister for additional resources, so it was put aside.¹⁷¹ The Minister, though, wanted some answers, and wrote to the NLA in October asking for its response to the report¹⁷². This time a detailed Council response could hardly be avoided. It included a commitment to establish the recommended Advisory Committee on the NFA (NFAAC)¹⁷³ The long road from 1935 was about to take a decisive turn.

more about librarianship...and gives them more opportunity for promotion. It also helps to combat isolationism and a tendency for sections to regard their own work and group as the only important service. You, yourself, will soon have been here long enough to expect to apply for and get a Lib 2 position, but experience in one section only is not a good background (though I certainly do not subscribe to the view that only those with an experience in a particular area should be promoted in it)” (Jean Whyte to Karen Foley 1 Mar 1974) NLA: MS 9616 Box 1.

During August to October 1976, as Acting NFA head, Karen Foley attended the second FIAF Summer School at the Staatliches Filmarchiv in East Berlin, and visited archives in Vienna, Copenhagen and London. The two month trip was funded by the AFTS on the same basis as my 1973 study tour.

¹⁷⁰ In a private communication, Peter Martin later commented on the Working Party process: “the Working Party undertook its investigations at a time when industry confidence in the Film Archive was at a very low ebb; the NLA was very close to a situation of having to be ‘chief witness’ in what could have become almost its own ‘trial’; publicly expressed differences arising at higher management levels between the NLA and Australian Archives (eg at Senate Standing Committee hearings on the Australian Archives Bill) had created serious tensions between these organisations which began to affect the Working Party’s deliberations; upper-level management in the NLA appeared to be extremely sensitive about some honest staff appraisals of the problems of operating the Film Archive in the NLA with the limited resources available to it; and there appeared, in my view, to be a very disturbing failure in the top management of the NLA to understand the special problems of the Film Section, or at least a failure to comprehend the extent to which the NLA’s reputation in this area had deteriorated.” (letter to Public Service Board from Peter Martin, 14 April 1981, copied to RE)

¹⁷¹ NLA Council report 2163, 11 April 1980. This was shortly before the end of George Chandler’s incumbency, which ended on 5 May. It is curious that the Council’s short valedictory statement on his achievements during the previous six years includes the comment “the National Film Archive has developed to become an integral part of the Australian film and television industry.” (NLA *Annual Report* 1979-80 p. vi)

¹⁷² Possibly with some prior encouragement from the AFC, which made the WP Report a public document in October 1980. It had been urged by at least one production company to do so. (Letter from David Salter, PLP Productions to Ken Watt, AFC Chair, 8 Sep 1980)

¹⁷³ Council report 2245, 10 December 1980. Harrison Bryan took over as Director General on 28 July 1980. The NLA Council had several advisory committees for specific subject areas. According to the Council of Australian State Libraries, “these advisory committees did not meet frequently enough to achieve their goals or to provide democratic

3.1.6 TOWARDS THE ARCHIVES ACT

The history of archival legislation in Australia – both state and federal – is one of delays and false starts.¹⁷⁴ The development of a comprehensive legislative basis for AA reached fruition only in the 1970s. The Archives Bill provided for the acquisition, retention, conservation and accessibility of ‘the archival resources of the Commonwealth’ and empowered AA to determine what constituted those resources, a power which the NLA saw as potentially threatening. Discussion on the Bill proceeded in the Senate and its committees from 1978 onwards, the Archives Act finally being passed in 1983. There were various matters of contention between the NLA and AA, with the NLA concerned about the circumscription of its remit and AA concerned to maximise the scope of its own authority. This raised several issues about the future of the NFA, and also, by implication, SR: (a) whether their functions and collections could be taken over by AA (b) the unwise splitting of responsibility for preserving the nation’s film heritage between NLA and AA (c) the logic of a distinction between government and non-government productions (d) matters of definition, nomenclature and aspiration.

On (a), while it was repeatedly stated that AA had no intention of taking over the NFA functions and collections, the possibility was never definitively excluded in the Archives Act.¹⁷⁵ On (b), it was argued, in effect, that the position adopted by the Commonwealth Archives Committee (CAC) in its evidence to the Paton Committee, that the functions of CAO should not extend to collecting the end-products of government activities, such as films and sound recordings, and that all such material should be kept together in one

representation, and were dominated by the National Library”. Kate Irvine, "Cooperation and Influence: History and Priorities of the Council of Australian State Libraries," *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 34.4 (2003). Having been forced to create the NFAAC, the NLA would try to squeeze it into the same pattern.

¹⁷⁴ Michael Piggott and Sue McKemmish, eds., *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives' First Fifty Years* (1994). appendix 2, pp208-219

¹⁷⁵ For example, House of Representatives Hansard 19 Aug 1980 p 401: “As at present advised, neither the functions of the Film Archive unit nor any of its films will be transferred to Australian Archives.”

institution¹⁷⁶ did not apply to master copies, as distinct from prints or usage copies.¹⁷⁷ On (c), the importance of having a single centre of gravity was deflected by arguing that the film heritage is already split among many institutions¹⁷⁸. On (d), one can interpret many of the statements and remarks, including the position adopted by AA during the work of the WP, as a conscious attempt to confine the role of the NFA and its use of the term 'archive', along with any latent aspirations for autonomy. "I am not aware that there *is* a National Film Archive", said Minister Wilson¹⁷⁹ and his predecessor had echoed the same sentiment.¹⁸⁰ By comparing the succession of letters and statements, it is obvious from the recurrence of ideas that AA was, so to speak, the Ministerial scriptwriter.¹⁸¹

Senator Chris Puplick, who already had a long standing interest in the NFA, distilled the issues with blunt clarity in the Senate on 21 Feb 1980 ¹⁸² :

It was quite clear, from the evidence presented to the Education and the Arts Committee, that there was substantial disagreement between Australian Archives and the National Library over the way in which film records were to be preserved. In essence ... Australian Archives said: we, as the principal archival

¹⁷⁶ Paton, Paton Committee. p. 46

¹⁷⁷ Senate standing committee on education and the arts, Hansard 5 Dec 1978 pp 59, 63, 64, 70-76. This is a technically illogical argument which clearly misrepresents CAC's position as put to the Paton Committee. On the other hand, it is unlikely that those representing the NLA in these committee discussions were sufficiently aware of film technicalities to be able to respond to the argument.

¹⁷⁸ Letter from the Minister for Home Affairs, Ian Wilson, to Senator Chris Puplick 7 May 1980: "....I know that various lobby groups have sought to form one single National Archive, but not unnaturally the many different authorities involved in the preservation of film, including the National Library, have opposed this on various grounds, not the least being that there should be no concentration in any one capital city of the national film heritage and that it should be available throughout the country where needed."

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from the Minister for Home Affairs, Bob Ellicott, to James Mitchell, Australian Film and Television Producers' Association 18 Oct 1979 : "The National Library, the Australian War Memorial and the Australian Archives each has in custody a very large collection of audiovisual material including films, but no one of these institutions constitutes a national film archive"

¹⁸¹ For example, in the context of the AFC Working Party (letter from Peter Scott, AA, to Peter Wagner, AFTS, 3 Dec 1976), AA contended that FIAF recognised two types of film archives: (i) the collection of films as exhibits of the art of the cinema – the film equivalent of a museum or art gallery (ii) the departments or sections of AV media in government archives which collect the documentation of the history of the country. It said the NFA was (i) and AA was (ii). This was neither an accurate description of NFA, nor a contextualised representation of FIAF's stance. The same argument was used later in ministerial correspondence.

¹⁸² Hansard 21 Feb 1980 pp 239-243. Looking ahead, Puplick would become the first chairman of the NFSA on 1 July 2008, the date of its inauguration as a statutory authority.

authority of the Commonwealth, should have the carriage of the storage, maintenance and collection of films within Australia. The National Library took the contrary view... [it] has its own national film archive which should be permitted to continue to be the principal collecting and repository authority of film records in Australia.

It is quite apparent that for reasons best known to itself, the Australian Archives has pursued a deliberate policy of establishing itself as almost the sole repository of the archival records of Australia. The Committee has adjudicated between the claims put to it by the Australian Archives ... and the National Library on behalf of the national film archives and has adjudicated in favour of the Australian Archives. I think that is a wrong decision... which fails to appreciate the very substantial difference in the way one would care for, collate and catalogue and, indeed repair and preserve different types of archival records. Old films particularly cannot be treated in the same way as old books... [the] trained experts, specialists and highly skilled people are part of the National Library ...part of the national film archives. Nobody within the Australian Archives has the slightest interest in films as films, as distinct from films simply as yet another archival record.

When the Archives Bill eventually comes before the Senate I shall be pressing very strongly... to ensure that the definition of record ... is in fact altered so that the film archives can be preserved and protected within the existing structure and in the hands of the existing dedicated specialists and experts in the national film archive within the National Library of Australia.

Reflecting the ever-spreading concern, a new forum, the Australian History and Film Conference, passed a number of resolutions at its first gathering which echoed Puplick's views about the territorial reach of AA, and called on the Government to establish a public enquiry "to formulate recommendations for the most efficient and effective national film preservation strategy for Australia". It recommended such an enquiry give due attention to the "principles for establishment of an Australian National Film and Television Archive" circulated by AFTA. The conference convened in Canberra at the NLA just weeks before the NFAAC held its first meeting.¹⁸³

In the end it did not matter that AA had argued its case with dubious logic, and that unlike the NFA it had no expertise or track record in the audiovisual field to offer to its

¹⁸³ Resolutions of the First Australian History and Film Conference, 27 November 1981. The AFTA principles are attached to the list of resolutions.

clients: it could merely provide what amounted to warehouse space and warehouse service. Regardless of how effectively or otherwise the NLA had advocated its own position during the proceedings, the NFA's vulnerability as a subset of the NLA had become all too clear. Any holistic approach to the preservation of the nation's film and television heritage, as such, would henceforth be fractured by the separation of 'government records', however defined by AA, from the rest¹⁸⁴. Nor was the concept of a national film archive one which the Minister formally recognised, even if others, like the NLA, AFC, FIAF and the NFA's users, did. And regardless of the advances it had recommended, the WP Report had so far led to only one tangible step by the NLA. The creation of the NFA Advisory Committee (NFAAC) was an inexpensive gesture which might be expected not to challenge the status quo. It seemed the NFA was on weaker formal and legislative ground than ever, while the prospect of a NFAAC being added to the panoply of the NLA Council's many advisory bodies might not necessarily add strength to its arm. It did not seem an encouraging start to the 1980s.

¹⁸⁴ The converse argument, that separating out audiovisual media fractures the holistic concept of government records, was advanced in a rather complex (and to this writer, technically invalid) way by AA. However, the argument depends on how government records are defined, and AA's predecessor in 1957 saw audiovisual materials as end-products of government activity rather than as evidentiary records of government transactions. It considered the institutional placement of audiovisual materials to be a matter of convenience only, and favoured both government and non-government materials being kept together. (Paton, Paton Committee, p 46)

NEW NFA INITIATIVES

By now, the reborn Australian feature film industry was winning plaudits overseas with films like *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Gallipoli*, *Newsfront* and *The Picture Show Man*, some of them drawing heavily on the collections and expertise of the NFA. New tax concessions were further stimulating film production.¹⁸⁶ The NFA got on with its work, demonstrating in practice the wider role of a national film archive in society as understood overseas, significantly raising its own public profile, establishing its own modest newsletter and taking new, externally funded initiatives. Significantly, all of them were internally generated – none were suggested or negotiated by the NLA hierarchy – but the National Film Library did also attract the personal interest and support of NLA Council chair Ken Myer.¹⁸⁷ The *Cinema Australia 1896-1956* film retrospective began a two year global tour of FIAF archive cinemas in March 1980¹⁸⁸, while the NFA's elaborate reconstruction of the 1927 silent film *For the Term of His Natural Life* opened and closed, respectively, the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals in June 1981 and then went on commercial release.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ NLA Director General Harrison Bryan has left a detailed recollection of this period in his book *No Gray Profession* (1994). To do justice to his point of view, the relevant extended extracts are set out in [Appendix 7](#).

¹⁸⁶ In 1980 the government amended Division 10BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act to encourage investment in film production: 150% of investments could be written off against income, and the first 50% of income from the project was tax-exempt.

¹⁸⁷ Kenneth Baillieu Myer AC DSC was NLA Council chair from August 1974 to March 1982. His personal endorsement was crucial in the acquisition of the Medianet computerized booking system for the NFLC (he quipped to me that because it was like a retail operation, he understood it) and he facilitated funding applications to the Myer Foundation. His awareness of the importance of computers in libraries started, he said, with the opening of the NLA building in 1968. Ebury, *Many Lives of Kenneth Myer*. P 467

¹⁸⁸ Financially supported by DFAT and the Japan Foundation, the retrospective of feature films and shorts, complete with a travelling exhibition, toured the cinemas of FIAF archives in Japan, Europe and North America. It was the first project of its kind. The history of Australian cinema was largely unknown internationally at the time.

¹⁸⁹ The project was funded by the AFC. It resulted in the re-assembly of a fragmented classic, with original music and colouring, in order to recreate the authentic experience of watching a silent drama. At this point the AFC was a crucial ally of the NFA, a legacy which would influence initial perceptions during the later takeover of 2003.

But it was the corporately sponsored *Last Film Search*¹⁹⁰ which was to have an unexpected and seminal impact. Launched on 27 October 1981 by film maker Peter Weir with the slogan 'nitrate won't wait', it proved a successful treasure hunt for old films which quickly captured the national imagination and brought the work of the NFA to broad public notice.¹⁹¹ The fact that Australia had lost much of its film heritage, was still losing it, and had an underfunded archive trying to save it, communicated as a simple message and helped to set the stage for later events. While it had, over the years, been the recipient of collection donations and other largesse, direct corporate sponsorship was a new departure for NLA and the concept created some management unease.

In 1981 the NLA, like the rest of the Public Service, was suffering from one of the recurrent 'razor gang' exercises in government budget cutting. The NFA was not spared its share of the pain. It had opened an access facility in Melbourne¹⁹² and moved its nitrate film from St Mary's, Sydney to its own purpose designed film vault at Mitchell ACT.¹⁹³ It had finally achieved the abandonment of the restrictive librarian designation from its senior positions, but additional posts were not filled because of the budgetary situation. Staff establishment had grown only marginally from the original seven positions allocated in 1972 to about ten, while workload, user demand and collections had increased exponentially, requiring periodic restrictions in access services. Much the same was true in SR, which was now separate from the Music Section. Its establishment

¹⁹⁰ The project had an initial budget of \$100,000 and the major sponsors were Kodak and the Utah Foundation. Negotiations with the sponsors were conducted by my deputy, Mike Lynskey, and me. The *Search* created a template later used by other film archives. The NLA published a book (Edmondson and Pike, *Australia's Lost Films*.) to coincide with the *Search*, attracting its own publicity when launched by former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in March 1982. Progress report: NLA Council report 2475, 1 October 1982

¹⁹¹ NLA *Annual Report* 1981-82, p 20

¹⁹² A lockable room in the State Film Centre, and staffed by the Centre.

¹⁹³ The first permanent, climate controlled home for the nitrate film since the collection started in the 1930s.

never exceeded four, and access demand¹⁹⁴ had far exceeded capacity. In November 1981, Peter Burgis made the first of many requests to be allowed to reduce services to the public, and to restrict risky access to fragile parts of the collection.¹⁹⁵ Much of the growing NFA and SR collections were housed in a very unsuitable environment.¹⁹⁶

NLA CULTURE AND PRIORITIES

This is a timely point at which to review some aspects of the NLA's culture and priorities which were critical to the events about to unfold. The NLA had spent previous decades establishing its place, some might say its supremacy, in the Australian library world. It had been at the centre of efforts to establish and promote librarianship as a worthy profession, and the idea, and ideology, of the librarian as a kind of all-purpose gatekeeper to information resources in all formats, at a level above the narrow subject specialist or enthusiast. It aspired to be a kind of "one stop shop" for the researcher:

The Council draws attention to the advantages of preserving and making available, in one institution, the totality of the national record in all its forms, apart from the record of government. This enables both the institution itself and those using it to have an overview of that record. It concentrates resources and expertise to meet the growing technological problems involved. It provides increased security for the national heritage.¹⁹⁷

While these words come from of the NLA's advice to the Minister in October 1983, in support of its claim to retain control of the NFA, the sentiment was of long standing and was supported by reference to the NLA Act, which proclaimed the NLA's statutory duty

¹⁹⁴ Typical users of the sound collections were radio and television stations, advertising agencies, record companies, schools, collecting institutions, film and television producers.

¹⁹⁵ Memo from Peter Burgis to the Director General 13 Nov 81

¹⁹⁶ The Old Government Printing Office (OGPO) at Kingston was assigned as overflow storage for NFA and SR, and eventually a large part of both collections resided there. It was a wood-framed structure, an acknowledged fire trap, and vermin infested. Semi-derelict, it was impossible to secure. Collections were stored on odd, discarded shelving or on the floor. Control of OGPO passed to NFSA in 1984.

¹⁹⁷ NLA *Annual Report* 1983-84, p 103

to develop a diverse “national collection of library materials”. In reality, of course, the NLA could only ever be one of hundreds of libraries, archives and museums housing the ‘national record’, but it was an appealing fiction which also implied that the NLA was a seamless institution, united in its mission to make the entire national record accessible for researchers.

Of course, in relation to films, and much later sound recordings, it was never seamless and united. From the beginning, to quote Rod Wallace, the “glamour section” was “never quite *in the Library*”.¹⁹⁸ In the 1950s John O’Hara and the Paton Committee recognised the incongruities inherent in the FD’s attachment to the NLA, and these never disappeared. It was not just the fact that systems, clienteles, services and relationships were separate and unconnected. The rest of the NLA *perceived* FD as different and was largely uninterested in it, if not envious of it. Official stances notwithstanding, there had always been vague doubts about the logic of its attachment to the NLA. Efforts by FD to make itself more visible and better understood to the rest of the NLA - for example, the open days of the 1970s¹⁹⁹ - failed to spark the interest of senior staff. Those who used FD were rarely part of the research community which the rest of the institution serviced, Those who ran FD were not part of the top level librarians’ ‘club’ which set the tone of the institution.²⁰⁰ FD’s place at the periphery of the NLA’s thinking was apparent in a myriad small ways, ranging from its accommodation to its use as a dumping ground for awkward staff.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

¹⁹⁹ Film screenings and hands-on demonstrations aimed at informing NLA staff about FD activities.

²⁰⁰ Many of the senior people at NLA were long serving, respected and committed members of the library community, influential in framing the community’s policies and perspectives. Jean Whyte’s diary entries 1970s to 1990s, letters and cards, demonstrate the strength of personal friendships among NLA higher level staff. This may have been beneficial in advancing the profession but it did not necessarily make it open to new ideas or perspectives. NLA: Acc 02.171 Box 1,5; NLA: Acc 10/044 Box 1,2,4-6,8

²⁰¹ Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup. Oral history Dulcie Penfold 12, 14 May 2003 TR 4964. Penfold headed the Film Division for a year, in 1954.

The audiovisual media were popular culture, not high culture. They did not, and some believe still do not,²⁰² have the prestige or credibility of books and traditional textual documents. The very term 'non-book materials', widely used in libraries, is a value-laden and deprecatory concept.²⁰³ That this mindset permeated NLA consciousness is apparent not only from the general absence of the audiovisual media in the conference papers and writings of its senior people, but also in the attention they get in official documents. For example, in a 54-page elaboration of acquisition plans for 1963-68, "audiovisual records" gets fifteen words:

The Library's collections of historical films and sound recordings, already significant, are to be developed.²⁰⁴

while a mindset fixated on the written word is evident in the 1976-77 *Annual Report*:

While oral history tapes are preserved, it is the transcripts that are most often used by researchers. A transcript represents the final, corrected version of an interview. The most immediate problems of the Oral History Collection usually relate to a large number of interviews awaiting transcribing.²⁰⁵

Looking through annual reports of the 1970s and early 1980s it is evident that FD and SR stay closer to the bottom than the top of the pecking order²⁰⁶ and, despite an eloquent plea to Government for more funds for these areas,²⁰⁷ little seems to change. As Jennifer Craik points out, governments tended to support traditional media.²⁰⁸

²⁰² Gisa Jahnichen, "Turning Audiovisual Archives into Scientific Assets," Journal of Knowledge Management Practice 12.3 (2011).

²⁰³ Edmondson, Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles. p 6

²⁰⁴ Clifford Amandus Burmester, Notes on Acquisition Policy and Programme 1963-1968 (National Library of Australia, 1963).

²⁰⁵ *NLA Annual Report 1976-77*, p 29

²⁰⁶ In a year when the NLA was extolling the success of its career development program, assisting 16 staff members in undergraduate and postgraduate librarianship studies, NFA staffer Kate McLoughlin had to travel overseas in her own time and at her own expense to be trained in a FIAF Summer School. (*NLA Annual Report 1977-78*, p 14)

²⁰⁷ "Not by books alone", *NLA Annual Report 1981-82*, pp 15-16

²⁰⁸ Jennifer Craik, Re-Visioning Arts and Cultural Policy., ed. John Wanna (2007).

The corollary of this mindset is that, outside FD and SR, there was little general understanding of the practicalities and legalities of acquiring and managing audiovisual collections, because they did not behave like traditional materials. In including films in his collection guides,²⁰⁹ C A Burmester assumed, incorrectly, that anything in the NFLC would be permanently available. The Cinesound Movietone project could be entered into by Allan Fleming in good faith, without understanding that the NLA lacked the means to effectively manage it. When the Council would soon suggest that access services for the NFA could be outsourced to a commercial entity, it would do so without comprehending its physical and legal impossibility. Emerging claims that some 'sectional interest' wanted to take over and control the NFA would make sense only if one could impute to rolls of film the kind of antiquarian value inherent in rare books, paintings or ancient maps. Yet films, as objects, do not generally have significant monetary value because the commercial potential resides in the content, the copyright in which is almost always owned by external parties. The physical collection is more of a financial liability than an asset.

All organisations tend to develop their own mythology, and a general belief that the NLA had heroically saved Australia's early film history when no one else cared had become a settled myth. The related claim that the film industry itself did nothing to preserve its own output may be true up to a point, but it also missed the point. This was the very reason, internationally, why public film archives were created. By the same token, if all book publishers had been assiduous in preserving and providing access to their output, there might be less need for public libraries.

Perhaps the greatest offence to internal sensibilities lay in the character of NFA, NFLC and SR. They may, like *Oliver Twist*, have dared to 'ask for more' in the internal division of resources. But as befitted entities dealing with popular culture, they were also outgoing, user oriented and entrepreneurial, and they demonstrated an ability to attract support, sponsorship and publicity on their own account. Such proclivities were at odds

²⁰⁹ Clifford Amandus Burmester, National Library of Australia: Guide to the Collections, 4 vols. (1974-1982).

with the secretive, authoritarian²¹⁰ and status-conscious culture of the NLA²¹¹ and the inward-looking personality preferences of librarians.²¹² The audiovisual areas and their users were expected to know their place and adapt to the dominant culture, because the reverse was not going to happen. In such an environment, dissent and criticism, especially public criticism, was not welcome.

As would soon become even clearer, the NLA's concept of a national film archive, as an information and research resource that happened to be in the form of film, had little in common with the concept held by the NFA's constituency, including FIAF, AFTA, AFC, AFTS and others who had taken a strong interest in its future.

3.1.8 ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE NFA (NFAAC)

Following NLA Council's commitment to the Minister in December 1980²¹³ to establish it, the NFAAC first convened on 10 December 1981. Its primary mandate was "to provide advice [to NLA Council] on matters of policy and relations with the film and television industry on any matter relating to the National Film Archive, and to act as a channel for information from the industry to the Library on any matters of interest to the National Film Archive" and it joined nine existing Council advisory committees.

²¹⁰ Mark Cranfield, Mark Cranfield Interviewed by Edgar Waters, rec 22 November 2002. NLA: TRC 4909 "Graham Powell [head of Manuscripts] himself said that the NLA's program in Manuscripts was 'unashamedly elitist'". When Cranfield suggested that a way of developing the oral history and folklore work might be to get some advice from experts and historians on who to interview, and how to design and conduct a program, though consultants or an advisory committee, [Cathy] Santamaria said 'the NLA doesn't believe in committees, the NLA makes its own choices, the NLA will decide who is going to be interviewed and who isn't.' The level of understanding about tape technology was very low: there was no serious concern with sound recording as sound recording." (Corrected version given by phone to Sue Edmondson).

²¹¹ Ian Healy, Review of Publicity/Public Relations Activity in the National Library (1984). Healy considered that the film activities generated enough publicity to merit their own public relations officer.

²¹² See Chapter 2

²¹³ Council report 2245, 10 December 1980

These met infrequently, and the NFAAC was expected to convene only once a year²¹⁴. In its first gathering the NFAAC decided otherwise, setting a bi-monthly schedule. It would go on to hold nine formal meetings before disbandment in early 1984. Being officially appointed advisors to the Council, as opposed to private commentators, the NFAAC had access to NFA staff, operations and corporate information, and a clear remit. The advice would come in due course, after the fact-finding.

Whether it was the determined work of the NFAAC, or whether this was now simply an idea whose time had come, the next two years would bring all the strands of cultural, political and industry advocacy to coalesce, by the end of 1983, in a call to government for the NFA and SR to be separated from the NLA and redefined as an autonomous institution. But that was still in the future when the NFAAC began its work with good will and an open mind.²¹⁵ Although NFA autonomy had been often mooted in the past, the group did not begin by presuming this to be desirable. Nor were the needs of SR addressed, as this was outside its mandate. While NFAAC members were appointed in a personal capacity, they were also prominent figures²¹⁶ within the film and television industries and academia, and had broad consultative networks. They were well aware of the views of their constituencies. They also informed themselves on the work of the NFA by spending time with its staff and requesting explanatory papers. Efforts were

²¹⁴ Council report 2299, 5 June 81. Two selection and acquisition subcommittees were also to be created, but these never eventuated. The Committee members were appointed on 7 August 1981 (Council report 2321) when Council was advised that the Chair, Phil Budden OBE, was a "long standing friend of the NLA and is likely to regard the appointment as an honour". Committee members, their backgrounds and the Committee's terms of reference are listed in the National Library *Annual Report* 1981-82, pp 78-79, and also discussed below.

²¹⁵ At its first meeting, the Director General said that "the National Film Archive [is] of great importance. The Council noted that the Archive was indebted to the goodwill of the industry. The committee would be free to decide its own patterns of operation. The availability of finance could be a limiting factor on frequency of meetings. ...terms of reference could be changed if the committee wished...it could recommend this at any time" (Minutes of 1st NFAAC meeting, 10 Dec 1981, pp1, 2); "the committee was seen as a long term entity, maintaining a continuing link with the industry...free to discuss or pursue any matters of its choice provided it recognised the limitations on it as an adversary [sic] committee of the Council" Minutes of 3rd NFAAC meeting, 16 April 1982, p3.

²¹⁶ The chair was Phil Budden OBE, chairman of Colorfilm Pty Ltd, Australia's largest film processing laboratory and an industry father figure. Members were Patricia Lovell MBE, film producer; David Williams, CEO of the Greater Union Organisation; James Mitchell, Executive Director of the Film and Television Production Association of Australia (FTPAA); James Malone, Federal Director of the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations (FACTS); Tom Ryan, film academic and teacher. The secretary was Mike Lynskey, NFA Curator. The Director-General was an ex officio member; he provided the formal link with the NLA Council, and attended every meeting. I attended all meetings by invitation, as did W D Thorn, Assistant Director General, Reference Division (or his delegate).

made to introduce the Director General, Harrison Bryan, to the film and television industry and to meet its key personnel, and also to expose him to the practical operations of NFA and NFLC.²¹⁷ Two NFAAC members took the opportunity, while overseas on other business, to visit the British National Film Archive as a point of external reference.²¹⁸

Tensions soon appeared.²¹⁹ Meeting with NLA Council for the first time in June 1982²²⁰, the NFAAC chair told them that his committee's main concern was the need to resolve functional duplication between AA and NLA.²²¹ There should be a single film archive, his personal view being that it should be located, for practical reasons, in Sydney. NFAAC was concerned at the NFA's high staff turnover, which it linked to low salaries and status. Access services were at crisis point. Members had reacted adversely to Council's suggestions that the NFAAC might be exceeding its mandate and meeting too often.²²² It achieved an elevation in the NFA's priority rating within the NLA to A1 status, the same as other Australian collections, which begged the question of why it for so long had

²¹⁷ An invitation which Bryan accepted: he spoke at a dinner of the Film and Television Production Association, organised by NFAAC member James Mitchell. On the other hand, Bryan never accepted any of my repeated invitations to visit the Film area and observe the operational processes of the NFA and NFLC, so unlike the other members of the NFAAC he had no hands-on acquaintance with this part of his institution.

²¹⁸ NFAAC minutes, 4th meeting, 16 July 1982 p3

²¹⁹ NFAAC draft minutes were vetted and sometimes significantly modified by the Director General or senior management before being sent to the chairman and members, who were not necessarily aware of this. Extant successive drafts provide evidence. NFAAC minutes were tabled at NLA Council meetings, as routinely appropriate for all Council committees.

²²⁰ Council report 2427 and minutes

²²¹ This was not an outcome the NLA Council could achieve alone, of course, but there was disappointment that NLA was not willing to pursue AA further on sections 5(2)(b) and 5(2)(f) of the Archives Bill.

²²² Council report 2410, 2 April 1982: the Committee "was developing in a different manner to other committees" and there was a "risk [the committee] might overlook its role". The Director General would suggest it meets three times a year. Harrison Bryan recalls that "the Committee rapidly assumed an adversarial position towards the very body it was purporting to advise". He believed he had made tactical errors in establishing the Committee, including allowing it to meet in Sydney, appointing a chair that was not a member of NLA Council, and admitting at its first meeting his own ignorance of the extent of the NLA's film operations. In retrospect, he believed the Committee to be the nucleus of a group dedicated to the establishment of an independent film archive. Harrison Bryan, *No Gray Profession* (Adelaide: Auslib Press, 1994).

lesser status.²²³ The possibility of access restrictions was flagged, and the Director General confirmed that the only other area imposing access restrictions was SR.

By the end of 1982, NFAAC had moved firmly the view that, for various practical reasons, the NFA should be relocated to Sydney, with an office in Melbourne. The necessary substantial increase in resources would be assisted by “the continued pursuit of a viable public image as politically important for the plans ahead.” It should remain part of the NLA, in order to avert any possibility of being subsumed by another authority, such as the AFC, AA or AFTS. It would thereby “achieve visibility, accessibility and credibility to the industry and the public: vital elements for a clear identity, desirable image and efficient operation...the possibility that it may grow into an authority in its own right cannot be discounted.”²²⁴ The Director General had expressed an open mind on the question of location.²²⁵ Nor was he opposed, in principle, to the idea of autonomy for the NFA.²²⁶ While always cautioning that he could not speak for the NLA Council, he regarded these as proper issues for the NFAAC to consider and recommend on, and did not rule them out as possibilities, unlike, for example, a separate letterhead for the NFA²²⁷. The NFAAC’s views were fed into the Nicholas Clark report, which was now underway (below).

²²³ NFAAC minutes meeting 2 (14 Feb 82) and meeting 3 (16 April 82)

²²⁴ “Future development of the NFA: recommendations from the NFAAC” was presented to NLA Council on 25 March 1983.

²²⁵ NFAAC chairman’s statement to Council following 4th meeting: appended to Council report 2474, 1 Oct 1982

²²⁶ For example, his response to J.Kenny’s memo of 8 July 1982 expressing her views on the Jeavons report (Clyde Jeavons, “Some Observations of the National Film Archive of Australia,” Cinema Papers (1982). This report is discussed later in this chapter.

²²⁷ See the DG’s own record of the informal NFAAC meeting of 14 Jan 1983, which fleshed out the logic of NFA moving to Sydney. On the question of a separate letterhead, “Mr Bryan ... was unable to agree... because it would be disruptive within the Library: existing Library stationery could be overprinted for NFA use.” (Minutes NFAAC 5th meeting, 17 Sep 82, p2)

3.1.9 ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

On 23 June 1982, the NFA announced temporary access restrictions.²²⁸ In effect, servicing of particular types of labour-intensive enquiries would cease. Industry reaction was immediate and continuing, a response which demonstrated how essential a resource the NFA had by now become.²²⁹ The restrictions also sent two implicit messages: (a) that the NFA was under-resourced (b) that other NLA services, except SR, were *not* being restricted²³⁰. While there had been no formal announcement about access to SR, services had been progressively declining and backlogs growing for some time. For example, the listening service had ceased in January 1982, and the situation would only get worse.

From this point, the tide of complaints to the Minister began to swell, and from September 1982 onwards, the NFA's situation became a matter of recurrent concern in the popular media.²³¹ Private correspondence among members of the NFAAC and their professional colleagues also indicates their gathering concern over staff morale and workloads, and the NLA's general treatment of the NFA.²³² At its July 1982 meeting, the NFAAC adopted resolutions calling on NLA to urgently increase NFA staff numbers and

²²⁸ NLA "For Information" sheets 21/82 (23 June 1982) and 31/82 (13 September 1982). At its meeting on 1 August 1982, the NLA Council resolved that "every effort be made to restore the full range of services formerly offered by the NFA and SR" (Res 114/82/2448). The Council noted the Director General's view that it would be unwise to introduce general fees-for-service but "the device of a voluntary levy could be pursued with the film and television industry". He added that precisely the same arguments apply to SR. (Report 2448). In those pre-digital days, providing access-to-order involving copying of footage was very labour-intensive and required work to be sent out to external film laboratories.

²²⁹ Telex from the Film and Television Production Association 25 June 1982, Memo RE to Director General 13 Jul 82, et al

²³⁰ For example, letter from John Morris, Managing Director, South Australian Film Corporation to Hon D T McVeigh, Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, 15 Sep 82

²³¹ *Nationwide*, ABC, 6 Sep 82 transcript

²³² These were sometimes copied to me by the authors and have been retained in my papers.

raise classification and salary levels.²³³ It also initiated the process for what become known as the Nicholas Clark report, intended as yet another comprehensive report on the needs of film archiving in Australia, with a view to the NLA Council putting forward a costed proposal to government.²³⁴

The restrictions triggered questions in Senate Estimates Committee B on 16 September 1982.²³⁵ In the coming months, Senators Puplick and Ryan²³⁶ would now be joined by others in calling the NLA to account for the NFA's situation. On this occasion, the Report of the Committee to the Senate drew particular attention to the NFA:

The Committee is concerned at the state of preservation of the collection of films and television programs in the National Library. In evidence before the Committee the Director-General of the National Library, Mr H Bryan, indicated that the Archive could not reach its goal of preservation in 1982-83 and that the completion of the overall program was in doubt by the year 2000. The Committee recommends that the necessary staff resources be made available to ensure that the program of preservation is complete by the year 2000.²³⁷

²³³ Neither was done. The resolutions were adopted at NFAAC meeting 4 (16 Jul 82) after comparisons had been made with comparable positions at other institutions. Just prior to meeting 5 (17 Sep 1982), the Director General wrote to the Acting Commissioner, Public Service Board on 14 Sep 1982:

".... The Library has not recently made a case for an increase in staff [in SR and NFA], though you may be aware of a certain amount of publicity that has been given to our deficiencies there. This publicity, I might say, has not been generated by the Library's Executive or sought by it, though it has been accompanied by considerable pressure from the industries served by these sections of the Library. This pressure has been exerted both on the Library and on the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment. There is no doubt that we have problems in these two areas ...we did not include them in our submission for 1982/83 because...the most urgent need was for the resources to allow the Australian Bibliographic Network to maintain the momentum of its development. Thanks to the increase in ceiling....that objective has been attained.

"I greatly appreciate your offer to consider [an urgent] case for staffing increases [in SR and NFA] ...but I would much prefer to include them in a properly balanced consideration of the Library's overall needs which would feature a statement on relative priorities [in the forward staff estimates for 1983/84.]"

²³⁴ Letter from B Smith, Assistant Secretary, Cultural Affairs Branch, DHAE to J. Skrszynski, General Manager, AFC 22 July 1982

²³⁵ Hansard, Estimates Committee B, 16 Sep 1982, pp 583-586. The NLA was unable to answer about half of Senator Martin's questions, and answered many others inaccurately.

²³⁶ Senator Ryan was Shadow Minister for the Arts and raised the question of legal deposit of films and television with the Minister on 20 April 1982

²³⁷ Report to the Senate, September 1982, p 5.

3.1.10 THE 'NICHOLAS CLARK REPORT' (NC)

The two-stage study *Film archives in Australia and Development options for the National Film Archive* undertaken by Nicholas Clark and Associates, which I will now refer to as NC, commenced in November 1982 under the auspices of the NFAAC. This followed its 5th meeting on 17 September 1982 and report to the NLA Council on 1 October 1982,²³⁸ at which another, prior, report was now considered in detail. It had been prepared by Clyde Jeavons, Deputy Curator of the British National Film Archive, following a week spent in Canberra in June 1981 at the NLA's request.²³⁹ It came from an overseas perspective, by the Deputy Head of one of the world's oldest and largest film archives which had, in the meantime, been visited by two NFAAC members. The report affirmed the principles, precepts and work of the NFA which generally paralleled the approach, though not the scale, of its British counterpart. Jeavons described the NFA's funding as "risible", in all respects lacking sufficient resources to carry out basic functions, but reserved his strongest comments for the question of the NFA's "identity and public image":

I regard it as particularly unfortunate that the NFA was established as a minor adjunct of a much larger and, on the whole, unrelated public institution, i.e. the National Library....it seems to me quite inappropriate for a film archive to be housed in, and have its destiny controlled by, a book library.... The results are plain to see: the [NFA's] own special needs, priorities and policies are fogged by the different, dominant ones of the parent body...its allocation of space and resources appears to come a very miserable second to the more monolithic needs of its controllers. As far as I can judge...it does not even enjoy its own official name, except insofar as it is typed in under the National Library banner....this confusion of purposes and lack of a separate identity can be very

²³⁸ The Council "discussed the possibility of separating the commercial use of the Archive from its archival function and research use; it was conjectured that a private servicing company might be better able to satisfy the requirement of the industry". Minutes, item 2474, 1 October 1982. It is not clear what assumptions the Council was making. I cannot envisage how such an arrangement would have worked in practice if proper archival management of the collection was to be maintained; nor could the access service be commercially profitable without imposing a fee-for-service regime that would be discriminatory compared to other areas of the NLA. It is possible that the Council did not understand that the NLA did not own copyright on the vast majority of items in the NFA.

²³⁹ Jeavons, "Some Observations of the National Film Archive of Australia."

destructive for an organisation which is heavily dependent upon public recognition for its successful development.²⁴⁰

Jeavons suggested that an independent detailed study of the work of the NFA be set up with a view to making recommendations on its future development, funding and status. This, in fact, is what it was hoped NC would now deliver. Yet Jeavons' report, which in retrospect anticipated the NFAAC's ultimate stance, may have simply drawn the battle lines with NLA management more clearly.²⁴¹

NC was designed as a two-stage exercise, the first part funded by AFC, the second by NLA.²⁴² A steering committee²⁴³ established terms of reference, with the first stage attempting to profile government, commercial, academic and private film and television collections, along with their policies, character and financial needs. This was done by questionnaire, phone calls and face to face interviews. Begun in October 1982, stage one assembled a mass of data but proved of limited value. Reviewing the results in February 1983, the NFAAC felt that by trying to design a brief comprehending the views of AFC, AA, Department of Home Affairs and Environment (DHA/E) and the AFI²⁴⁴ the result had been woolly and confusing. Perhaps the consultants had not fully addressed the brief anyway. However, stage one had established that the NFA held sixty per cent of all film in archival custody in Australia, that there was a severe lack of preservation and storage facilities, and that almost twice as much material of an archival nature is held outside

²⁴⁰ Jeavons also felt that the NFA would be better located in Sydney "where the action is". On the question of the "proliferation of archives" he suspected there was overlapping, competition and inefficiency. He saw the solution as "...[giving] proper recognition to the NFA, plus the status and authority to organise and control complementary policies and maintain standards, and to ensure that it remains Australia's official representative in negotiations with film and television organisations and in international archiving matters. I do not see this happening from its present constricted and subordinate position in the National Library."

²⁴¹ For example, memo from Janice Kenny 8 July 1982

²⁴² Tenders were called and Nicholas Clark and Associates were the successful bidders. In his 1989 oral history, Harrison Bryan remembered Clark from University of Queensland days when Bryan was University Librarian and Clark was the student leader. Harrison Bryan, Harrison Bryan Interviewed by Peter Biskup, rec 7 December 1989, Canberra.

²⁴³ Joseph Skrzynski (General Manager, AFC – Convenor), James Malone (Executive Director, Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations), James Mitchell (Executive Director, Film and Television Production Association of Australia), Prof. Robert Neale (Director General, Australian Archives), Ray Edmondson (NFA)

²⁴⁴ Senator David Hamer was the chair of the Australian Film Institute (AFI)

archival storage as within it. Stage two, which began in mid-May 1983, would focus on the developmental needs of the NFA and should form a sound basis for advice to the Minister.²⁴⁵

The consultants presented a progress report to the 7th meeting of the NFAAC on 12 July. Immediately following this meeting, concerns emerged about the direction of the study.²⁴⁶ After this date the consultants showed no further interest in input from the NFA, preferring to talk only to NLA management.²⁴⁷ NFAAC doubts would be confirmed when Nicholas Clark tabled its *Interim Report* at the NLA Council meeting of 5 August 1983, *before* NFAAC members had seen it.²⁴⁸ When the final report was received and sent to NFAAC members, one of them, film producer Pat Lovell, promptly resigned²⁴⁹, citing her frustration with the NLA for ignoring the Committee's advice, and saying she had wasted eighteen months of her time. She subsequently publicly called for the

²⁴⁵ Minutes of NLA Council meeting, report 2539, 25 March 1983. The Stage 1 report, "Survey of organisations involved in the collection and preservation of films and videotapes of moving images", ran to 140 pages.

²⁴⁶ Letter from Pat Lovell to Phil Budden, 20 July: "I am extremely suspicious...if the report is to be a true one they should have been interested in the deliberations of the Advisory Board so far. I believe we have a very serious situation with the Library bureaucracy digging its heels in...it worries me that we have not been allowed to put our position to the Library Council in person. I hold out very little hope that [NC] will attempt to be anything but a superficial one... We have so far played by the rules but if I get no encouragement soon then I fear the only thing to do is to yell about it free of the Advisory Committee."

²⁴⁷ From a personal note I made c. 5 August, I calculated that I and other NFA staff had had a total of 10 hours 'face time' with the consultants, only half of which was useful information provision. The rest consisted of listening to the consultants' recital of their views, and attempting to correct erroneous information given to them by NLA management. I noted that the consultants individually, but mostly jointly, had spent at least six and a half hours – probably more – with certain people in management.

²⁴⁸ A copy was delivered to me with a covering note from W D Thorn, Assistant Director-General (Reference) dated 8 August which read, in part: "This interim report was not fully discussed, however Council decided that the final report... would be sent when received to the Advisory Committee for its comments. The final report....together with the comments of the Advisory Committee and a report from the Library will be considered at the meeting of Council on 7 October. ...this Interim Report should not be given a wide distribution at this stage. Copies of the final report will be sent to members of the Advisory Committee". The inference was that NFAAC members should not see the Interim Report. Harrison Bryan recalls "Clark brought an interim report to Council which, to the fury of the Advisory Committee, recommended that the archive stay with us, in every sense of the phrase. There, perhaps, one might have thought, the matter might have rested." Bryan, No Gray Profession.

²⁴⁹ On 23 Aug 1983

immediate removal of the NFA from NLA and its creation as a separate statutory body.²⁵⁰

3.1.11 DYNAMICS AND TENSIONS IN THE NLA

The NFA's increasing public profile, with *For the term of his natural life, The Last Film Search* and its success in gaining its own Council advisory committee, did not go unnoticed or unchallenged. In an institution where insufficient resources were doled out with a kind of inter-sectional parity, the NFA and SR could be seen as trying to grab more than their fair share. In a publicity-averse organisation²⁵¹ the generation of excessive publicity, and especially controversy, was unsettling.²⁵² Even the introduction of a letterhead for the NFA, a minor gesture requested by the NFAAC and consistent with FIAF obligations, was deemed sufficiently sensitive for Harrison Bryan to first promise it, and then retract the promise.²⁵³ Nor can the events of 1983 and 1984 have been very comforting to NFA and SR staff or conducive to their morale, as they tried to get on with their jobs amid swirling rumours of job losses and relocation.²⁵⁴

An alternative to increasing the permanent staff of the NFA and SR was to allocate unskilled temporaries to undertake routine tasks. Soon the 'Task Force' staff in NFA and

²⁵⁰ Beverley Miller, "Producer Quits Library's Film Advisory Committee," Canberra Times 8 Oct 1983. p 3. Pat Lovell publicly states her reasons for resignation.

²⁵¹ Healy, Review of Publicity/Public Relations Activity in the National Library.

²⁵² Judy Cannon, "Film, Sound Archives in State of Siege," Canberra Times 16 November 1983.

²⁵³ Minutes of 5th NFAAC meeting, 17 September 1982

²⁵⁴ An indication of wider staff morale was the advent of a NLA staff association and its newsletter, *Unity*, in late 1982. A feature of *Unity* was unflattering cartoon commentaries about the actions of clearly recognisable senior staff. One referred to the removal of the Map Collection into an unsatisfactory location. Map Curator, Dorothy Prescott, resigned, making clear that she was not consulted on the move which happened while she was on leave. It was inappropriate for the collection and its users, she added, and she would not compromise her professional integrity by continuing in her position. The NLA's announcement attributed Mrs Prescott's departure merely to her decision to become a consultant. (Resignation letter Dorothy Prescott to Harrison Bryan 15 June 1983, NLA press release 30 June 1983)

SR outnumbered the permanent staff. While this reduced backlogs, the knowledge and skills gained were lost when these people were reassigned, a matter of continuing concern to the NFAAC.²⁵⁵ Further, the size and influence of the NFA and SR could also be reduced by detaching functions. SR's small technical capability was transferred to Preservation Services Branch in March 1983²⁵⁶; the NFA's and SR's consumables budgets were next, a few weeks later.²⁵⁷ Simultaneously there was a proposal to centralise all 'special materials' cataloguing (that is, NFA, SR, Maps, Pictorial, Music) by transferring staff from these areas into a single unit.²⁵⁸ First mooted in September 1982, after months of discussion and reports the proposal ran out of steam.

In early 1983, asbestos was found in the NLA building fabric, a potential health hazard to everyone. Negotiations between unions and management broke down, resulting in a divisive one day strike. From 7 July the building was picketed, stopping the flow of goods and services for nine weeks. Each side accused the other of devious behaviour, and there is a hint of conspiracy in the NLA's report of the experience.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ For example, minutes of the 5th meeting, 17 September 1982

²⁵⁶ Memo from W D Thorn to G Clark, ADG Coordination and Management, 1 March 1983: Proposes the transfer, subject to review after 12 months. The branch was created in 1982 to "rationalise" conservation and preservation resources. (NLA *Annual Report* 1981-82 p 21)

²⁵⁷ Memo Ray Edmondson to W D Thorn, 4 Mar 1983 expressing concern about this change in SR and the precedent it sets. I did not need to be warned that the NFA's technical staff and facilities would be next on the list, although while NC consultancy was underway this would have been a provocative move and, as it turned out, NC advised against it. Dispersal of the NFA collections, for example, moving the film stills and posters to the Library's Pictorial section, would have been a further obvious option had events not intervened.

²⁵⁸ At the time, the library profession globally was still trying to put complex objects into simplistic frameworks. Archivaly, moving images and recorded sounds did not fit into the constraints of the NLA's computerised cataloguing systems (AusMARC and ABN) which could not handle such aspects as provenance, production chronology, and the concepts of preservation and duping copies. They could not distinguish a camera negative from a print, nor recognise a master tape or a stamper for vinyl pressings. Cataloguing systems based on the concept of the book or printed materials could not be adapted to the complex needs of audiovisual archiving. It was not until the NFSA could independently tackle these issues, developing its MAVIS system on a different philosophical basis, that a fully workable answer was found – and exported to other audiovisual archives. It was an important step in the evolution of the profession. It was not until 1997 that IFLA released FRBR, its first public document recognising the multidimensional nature of film, video, sound and digital objects, as well as books. (Ian Gilmour, email 27 September 2011)

²⁵⁹ "The disruption caused by the TLC of the ACT picket on the Library from July to September 1983 had a marked effect on the use of the Library.....the almost complete dislocation of the mail service to and from the Library was a matter for grave concern...because, inevitably, it created in many users' minds an image of the Library as lacking in both efficiency and civility. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that this experience coloured some of

3.1.12 TENSIONS BECOME PUBLIC

The 1983-84 financial year began with the strike. Shortly thereafter, NFA Curator Mike Lynskey signaled his departure, to take effect in late August. The conference of the Australian Branch of IASA passed resolutions calling for the creation of an Australian Institute of Recorded Sound (AIRS), and for the return to SR of the technical position recently moved to the NLA's Preservation Branch. The futures of the NFA and SR were now hot topics. Articles or letters in the press, many of them instigated by the NLA, questions or comments in Parliament and letters to the Minister were becoming a weekly and sometimes a daily occurrence.

I had recently been phoned by a film industry colleague, whose name I do not now remember, with a simple message. The gist of the conversation was that I could no longer hide in public service anonymity. Supporters of the NFA needed to know where I stood concerning its future. Some days later, Fia Cumming, a journalist who had previously written general interest pieces about the NFA, appeared at my office in quest of another story. The result was an article in *The Bulletin* for the week ending 16 August 1983²⁶⁰, in which both Mike Lynskey and I were more or less accurately quoted. It summarised the story so far, and expressed my concern that, at the stroke of a pen, the NFA could disappear in a NLA reorganisation. It angered NLA management, which promptly demanded an explanation, claiming I had overstepped the bounds of official conduct.²⁶¹ What I did not know at the time was that the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke,

the public reception to the newspaper controversy over the National Film Archive which erupted almost on the same day as the picket was lifted." *NLA Annual Report 1983-84*, p 14

²⁶⁰ Fia Cumming, "Film Rescued but Archive in Trouble," *The Bulletin*. My personal comments were quoted, but the bulk of the article drew on publicly available information, including Harrison Bryan's own report on the state of the collections in the *NLA Annual Report 1980-81*. By then, the current situation of the NFA was widely known. Possibly what most irked NLA management, and discomforted me, was not so much what she said but how she said it. But that is the standing risk of talking to journalists, and Cumming was a well known and effective commentator. I touch on the context in my personal reflection in Chapter 6.

²⁶¹ Memo from W D Thorn, 10 August 1983

had read the article and had asked his senior advisor, Bob Hogg, to pursue the issue.²⁶² In the weeks ahead, as Hogg did so, there would be follow up articles and letters in *The Bulletin* and elsewhere, as events unfolded.

In the same week, the Australian Screen Studies Association met in Melbourne to discuss the future of the NFA, anticipating the imminent tabling of NC. It wrote to the NFAAC chairman:

“...the meeting took the view that the most important single question facing the archive at the moment was that of its financial and administrative independence from the National Library, and that this question took precedence over questions of its location”²⁶³

Further, I had been telephoned by the Executive Director of the AFI, Kathleen Norris, who had anonymously received a copy of NC²⁶⁴. I was told the AFI would be organizing a film industry conference to respond to it²⁶⁵. This step was necessary, she said, because the NLA, via the consultants, had not sought the views of the industry. Now they would be heard.

The conference convened in Sydney on 12 September. It was attended by, among others, three members of the NFAAC and Bob Hogg. The NLA was not invited.²⁶⁶ The resolutions were sent to the Minister for Home Affairs, some other ministers and shadow ministers, the NLA Council and the NFAAC. In due course they would be clearly

²⁶² As recounted to me by Mike Lynskey, following a conversation he had with Bob Hogg in August 1983.

²⁶³ Letter from the Australian Screen Studies Association to Phillip Budden, 12 August 1983

²⁶⁴ “The coordinator of the Australian Film Institute conference, Richard Watts, said that when he had asked the National Library for a copy of the Nicholas Clark report, it had refused. ‘There must have been some pretty funny stuff going on because a few days later a copy of the report arrived on our doorstep anonymously – literally in a plain brown wrapper’ he said.” Margaret Simons, “Film Archives Report Rejected by Industry,” *The Age* 14 Sep 1983.

²⁶⁵ At that point, NC was not a public document and had not been considered either by NFAAC or NLA Council. Three consecutive issues of the AFI newsletter, *Projections* Nos. 28 to 30 (September 1983 to June 1984) give an extensive background and coverage conference, and its aftermath.

²⁶⁶ Richard Watts: “it was felt we would be able to speak more freely without them there”. Quoted by Simons, “Film Archives Report Rejected by Industry.”

reflected in the 1984 Cabinet decision establishing the NFSA. The meeting rejected NC, called for the immediate separation of the NFA from NLA, and set out the NFA's recommended functions as an autonomous body, which should be left to make its own decisions about its location. Crucially, the meeting recommended a closer relation between NFA and SR, the first time this potential connection seems to have been publicly articulated.²⁶⁷

The NLA did not respond to the recommendations, but did issue two press releases defending its record, seeking more money for the NFA, and claiming to correct statements in the press which "have been characterized by astonishing flexibility with regard to fact".²⁶⁸ The five remaining members of the NFAAC telexed the Director General on 20 September to confirm their support for the generality of the AFI resolutions, while Pat Lovell appeared on the *Sunday* current affairs program to underline the urgency of the NFA's situation:

"Our National Film Archive is probably the worst equipped, the most understaffed film archive in the world....I fear that if the Archive stays within the jurisdiction of the National Library and is part of that Public Service machine, we won't have a National Film Archive within a year." ²⁶⁹.

Events were moving quickly. According to Fia Cumming, there was strong support in Cabinet for autonomy and adequate funding for the NFA. An announcement by the PM at the AFI Awards ceremony on 25 September was anticipated.²⁷⁰ When being

²⁶⁷ This was affirmed in a telex to the Minister for Communications from the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters on 22 September ".... [the Federation] applauds the government's initiative in finding a solution to some of the problems besetting the National Film Archive. With respect, we ask that similar sympathetic consideration be extended to the national collection of audio recordings so that the problems currently associated with the care of this unique archive can become the subject of an urgent investigation."

²⁶⁸ NLA press releases on NFA 18 and 19 Sept 1983

²⁶⁹ Pat Lovell on Sunday, Nine network, 17 Sept

²⁷⁰ Fia Cumming, "Hawke Swoops to Rescue of Archive," The Bulletin. Reported supporters in Cabinet included Senators Susan Ryan and Gareth Evans, and MPs Barry Jones, John Dawkins and Chris Hurford. Future AFC chair Philip Adams was reportedly also involved in the discussions.

interviewed on 26 September, after the ceremony²⁷¹ the previous evening, the Prime Minister made some encouraging comments:

“The necessary resource will be made available so that a National Film Archive is developed to fulfil the very important task of guaranteeing the preservation of our film heritage...there is a certain allocation there now which has been operated through the Library and perhaps not as efficiently as it might be. We’ll build more effectively on what’s there and give it some autonomy so that it can concentrate on what is a distinctly important task....”²⁷²

In the *Canberra Times*²⁷³ next day, the NLA interpreted these remarks as supportive and in no way implying that NFA would be removed from NLA. The same issue carried an editorial which put the case for retaining the NFA in the NLA:

... this lobby group [the Australian Film Institute and the film industry] has seized [on] the immediate separation of the Film Archive, and its establishment as a statutory authority in Sydney or Melbourne...as an ambit claim that all reads no worse than many. But it is to be hoped the Government will regard it as just that.... and that it will recognise the naiveté inherent in the enthusiasm for a small, separate institution. In the piranha pool of the Canberra bureaucracies, seekers of worthy but not absolutely essential expenditure would be better advised to stick together. The Government itself could scarcely countenance another statutory body. Mr Hawke made a definite but unspecific commitment on money and staff, but he did not refer to physical location or autonomy: those issues remain open.

It is obvious that, like the AFI, the writer had access to NC, which at this point was not a public document. It can be no coincidence that a follow up editorial appeared on 7 October, the day of the NLA Council meeting, which mentioned “considerable anxiety that the film archive could be hived off from the National Library to the detriment of both” and that this would “encourage attempts at further depredations on other collections....where would it end?” It added that more money and staff is needed “so long as it applies to all the starved archival areas and not film alone”. These would be the very issues the Council would address.

²⁷¹ Mike Lynskey and I took the opportunity to introduce ourselves to the Prime Minister during the evening, and also to Home Affairs Minister Barry Cohen. Both were encouraging. Cohen started reciting some information on the NFA that he had been given by the NLA, and I had to explain that the information was wrong. He looked hard at me, and said he would like to meet with me to continue the conversation. Some weeks later the meeting took place in his office, privately, without the presence of anyone from the NLA or the DHAE. I advised the Director General beforehand that the Minister had asked to meet with me.

²⁷² Transcript of interview conducted by Sue Kellaway for *Today*, 26 Sept 1983

²⁷³ "Preserving Records [1]," *Canberra Times* 26 September 1983.

The NFAAC convened for its 8th meeting on 29 September and considered NC which, among other things, recommended that NFA remain part of NLA and stay in Canberra, and would need only three or four extra staff positions if the Task Force continued to deal with backlogs. NFAAC had already advised the Director General²⁷⁴ of its support for the generality of the AFI conference recommendations. It considered NC was disappointing, negative and avoided the main issues. There had been absence, even rebuttal, of industry consultation. It considered the consultants had not properly discharged their brief. Concern was expressed at the NLA's ignorance of long-standing and increasing industry antagonism. The Director General repeated that he was not philosophically opposed to autonomy, but that he would support NC because it went some way towards meeting the NFAAC's objectives. It was agreed that NFAAC would prepare a statement to the NLA Council.

On 6 October, NLA issued a press release in which the Director General "totally rejected" claims made by Peter Burgis, in his capacity as chairman of IASA Australia, that the NLA had neglected its sound recording collection.²⁷⁵ It engendered a Canberra Times story the following morning ("Library to consider disciplining archivist") which drew a strong

²⁷⁴ By telex on 20 September

²⁷⁵ "Mr Bryan said Mr Burgis had apparently proposed to the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, and to all Federal Members of Parliament that the Government set up two statutory authorities, one for sound recordings and the other for archival film. 'The cost involved makes both suggestions ludicrous and would set back even further urgent preservation work which should be the real concern of everyone' he said. Mr Bryan also said that if it had not been for the National Library nearly half a million sound recordings would have been lost to the nation. 'It was the National Library in the early days which took the initiative to preserve the sound recordings, as we had previously done in the case of archival film, when no-one else cared' he said. 'We have safeguarded these priceless records of Australian history and should not be condemned for not having all the resources we need because of the state of the economy.' Mr Bryan had particular difficulty with Mr Burgis' statement..... 'Such statements by members of staff make effective administration extremely difficult' Mr Bryan said. 'Mr Burgis would be aware of course of the code of conduct applicable to public servants, but that apart, his actions seemed to reflect a strange sense of propriety, a remarkable lack of loyalty to his employers and, at least, a disturbing confusion of means and ends.'" NLA Press release "Sound Recording Collection", 6 October 1983.

In his memoirs, Harrison Bryan adds: "I also had the unhappy duty of reprimanding very publicly Peter Burgis..... Council was very angry at this further instance of disloyalty and firmly endorsed my actions." Bryan, No Gray Profession.

response from one of SR's users²⁷⁶. The same issue carried the editorial mentioned above. Importantly, both were read by the members of the NFAAC who had come to Canberra to attend the NLA Council meeting later in the day.²⁷⁷ At that meeting, the NFAAC's commentary on NC was tabled. It damned the consultants' failure to consider development options outside the NLA, to substantiate their conclusions or to offer serious costing options²⁷⁸. In concluding his presentation speech to the Council, Phil Budden said:

We believe it is inevitable that the NFA will become independent. There will never be a time when it could be moved so efficiently and so economically. Why is NLA not proud of the fact that this child has come of age and is well able to move out and care for itself?²⁷⁹

On the same afternoon, Senator Margaret Reid drew attention to the Canberra Times article on Burgis, and defended his actions:

...I appreciate....the role of a public servant in not criticising his employer and I agree with that as a principle, but this is a grey area and a difficult one, and I would be disappointed indeed if the National Library Council took any form of disciplinary action....Listen to Mr Burgis. Do not criticise him for what he has said. Cooperate with government in seeing the very best endeavour is put into preserving these treasures....

²⁷⁶ Jill Southwell, President of Print Handicapped Radio, faxed the Director General on 7 October: "Very sorry you had to come out and try to crucify Mr Peter Burgess [sic] in such a way in the Canberra Times. Perhaps if you had an adequate financial setup of funding and did not treat sound as the poor man in the family you would not need to get egg on your face. Our sound is our heritage, should be kept and nurtured as our right, not as something you do as the last resort...."

²⁷⁷ I recall meeting with Phil Budden and David Williams on the evening of 6 October after they had met with Harrison Bryan, and again on the morning of 7 October. At the first meeting I got the impression that Bryan had persuaded them into a conciliatory mood over dinner; at the second, their mood had changed to a determination to advocate the NFA's independence. Whatever Bryan had told them over dinner had clearly been contradicted the next morning by what they had read in the Canberra Times.

²⁷⁸ "There is a sense...that the consultants' conclusions were pre-ordained. It would...appear that there has been a lack of consultation between the consultants and those with expertise about or concern for the future development of the NFA...or with any other individuals or bodies that might have provided constructive input. It is not unreasonable to ask with whom, exactly, the consultants did discuss the future of the NFA. ...the Clark Report is in breach of the terms of reference...it is unsatisfactory and we urge that the Council of the NLA refuse to accept it, noting that until the terms of reference are met any payment for services will be withheld".

²⁷⁹ Following the meeting, and without their knowledge, the Council conveyed the NFAAC's commentary to Mr Nicholas Clark, who in turn wrote to every NFAAC member threatening legal action. The minutes of NFAAC's 9th meeting on 31 January 1984 record "it was noted that the Committee's report to Council was made correctly and in good faith. Mr Bryan advised that Council decided to make it available to Nicholas Clark, whose letters now called into question the legal ability of this committee (or any government committee) to give frank and privileged advice and to be indemnified in doing so."

She added that the future administrative attachment of SR to the NLA was a matter for discussion, but it should be at least physically separate. She was immediately followed by Senator David Hamer who called unequivocally for the NFA to be set up as a separate statutory body, at the latest by 1986.²⁸⁰

Following the meeting,²⁸¹ the Council prepared its confidential advice to the Minister.²⁸² It recommended against autonomy for the NFA, noting that as a separate institution it “could not realistically be expected to grow to more than a modest size” – a total of twenty eight staff by the end of 1985-86 would be sufficient, and ultimately it could never grow to more than about double that number.²⁸³ The divide between the NLA Council and its Advisory Committee was now unbridgeable. The NFAAC foresaw as inevitable an archive that was as large and independent as it needed to be to properly carry out its function for the nation. The NLA Council could not imagine a NFA larger than a medium sized section of the NLA, retained within the parent institution without altering the NLA’s character.

3.1.13 PUBLIC CONTROVERSY

By now, the NFA name and brand was firmly established and accepted by almost everyone, even AA²⁸⁴ if not AACOBS,²⁸⁵ and its essential range of functions and role in

²⁸⁰ Senate Hansard, 7 October 1983, pp 1330-1335. Hamer added “...it will take time because of the heavy reliance on the present infrastructure of the National Library. In the meantime, the National Film Archive should be given an operational charter in the form, I suggest, of a Cabinet resolution, with its own governing board, representative of the film and television community and with executive power. It should be attached administratively either to the Department of Home Affairs and Environment or to the Australian Film Commission. That is a matter of organisational structure on which I do not pass an opinion...they seem to me the only two possible short term options.”

²⁸¹ I was informally told that the NLA Council suspended its meeting around 2 pm in order to listen to the radio broadcast of the Senate debates.

²⁸² Later published in the NLA *Annual Report* 1983-83, pp 102-104

²⁸³ At 30 June 2011, the NFSA had a staff of 232 (*Annual Report* 2010-11)

²⁸⁴ Letter from AA Director General Prof R Neale to Harrison Bryan 7 Apr 1983

society was not only being exercised in practice, but had been more or less recognised in the expectations of a considerable constituency, as well as in a string of reports stretching back to 1956. SR may have lacked a distinctive name, or a parallel history of successive reports, but it also had a significant constituency. What now lay in the balance was the future organisational identity of both: whether they would be linked, whether they would continue to be part of the NLA in their present guise, whether they would emerge as a separate statutory authority, or be provided for in some other way. Location for the NFA, too, had been a hotly discussed issue, and whatever the ultimate answer to that question, it was now unlikely to satisfy everybody.

Following the October 7 NLA Council meeting the issues would not be quickly resolved. On 11 October a statement of the NLA Council's position was presented to the Minister.²⁸⁶ Behind the scenes, in the Department and the Minister's office, a number of structural options were being tested.²⁸⁷ The Prime Minister's office, and particularly Bob Hogg, played a significant role in these deliberations, as did Minister Barry Cohen, who took a personal interest in the matter.²⁸⁸ The delay allowed space for continued advocacy for

²⁸⁵ AACOBS – the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services – thought that “perhaps the word ‘archive’ – adopted with little understanding of the precise definition as understood by archivists of the Sir Hilary Jenkinson school – has caused this confusion... certainly the use of the expression ‘historical film collection’ would have avoided some confusion.” It goes on to say that “the argument ought to centre around the size of the cake to be cut up, and not primarily the size of the slice entitled ‘film archives’.... Why should historical films be an exception?” Robert C Sharman writing in the AACOBS Newsletter Vol 3 No 5 November 1983. His argument is put in context in his pamphlet Robert C Sharman, “Our National Heritage: The Australian Librarian's Commitment to Its Preservation,” (c 1989), vol.

²⁸⁶ This was drafted by Bryan. “After pointing out that it was NLA's initiative alone that had made possible any archiving of Australian films and any service from the collection...we emphasised the value to scholars of having, in the one institution and at the one location, all the source materials for Australian studies, irrespective of the media in which they were preserved....Barry Cohen never called us to amplify or support in any way this statement and it remained, of course, confidential. It was unfortunate that this completely stymied any possible chance of our influencing public opinion, which was being continually inflamed against us by the film lobby and its supporters, both within the Parliament (and, indeed, within the Library) and outside....I doubt if we could have had any effect even if we had been able to make our case publicly.” Bryan, No Gray Profession. Nevertheless these scruples did not inhibit the NLA from doing just that. It issuing continuous press releases and circulated an “information kit” to all parliamentarians in 13 October, just two days after this advice to the Minister.

²⁸⁷ These were Cabinet-in-confidence but I was reliably informed by a trusted source within Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet that they covered the gamut from maintaining the status quo to complete statutory independence, with some partly-autonomous options in between.

²⁸⁸ The long foreshadowed private meeting with Minister Cohen took place on 3 November 1983. We discussed the issues for about an hour. Cohen informed me that he was unhappy with the briefing he had received

and against retention within the NLA, in the obvious hope that it would influence the outcome. The war of words eventually went well beyond the future of NFA and SR into other areas of the NLA's performance, and only served to increase tensions.²⁸⁹

The NLA increasingly claimed the high moral ground, accusing its critics of acting improperly, although it had no compunction about publicly or privately vilifying its own staff.²⁹⁰ Its public stance was that it was *not* fighting a battle to retain the NFA or SR.²⁹¹ Nevertheless, a flurry of Ministerial letters from prominent people, former Directors-General, NLA clients and senior members of the library community erupted, all on message and urging the Government to leave NFA and SR within the NLA. In the interests of communicating what it claimed as "the facts", the NLA produced a flow of press releases and distributed an information kit on 13 October 1983 to about 250 "persons of influence and standing in the community, including Members of Parliament"²⁹². These actions, however, merely invited critics to respond with 'facts' of

from his Department and he wanted my perspective. Following the meeting I, in turn, sent a briefing note to the NLA Director General.

²⁸⁹ Peter Biskup, "Fierce Wrangle over Movie Treasure Trove," Australian Financial Review 30 March 1984. pp 40, 41, 46. The article begins with a resume of the issues surrounding the NFA, commenting that the Library "has repeatedly tried to shift the blame on external factors", has fought "a determined rear-guard action to keep [the NFA] under its control", and noting that the Library Association claimed that autonomy would amount to a "sell-out to sectional interests". It challenged the NLA's performance in a wide variety of its other activities. In response, Harrison Bryan issued a 6-page statement "NLA – The facts" (3 April 1984) accusing Biskup of "mischievous sabotage", denying that the NLA is engaged in a rearguard action to retain the NFA, and noting that the NLA only wanted to ensure "that the discussion was illuminated by the facts of the case....this kind of concern for the proprieties, seemingly not shared by all who have participated in the debate, ...continues to constitute something of a handicap, but some standards must be preserved."

²⁹⁰ For example, Beverley Miller, "Library to Consider Disciplining Archivist," Canberra Times 7 Oct 1983. and Senator Margaret Reid, Senate Hansard, 7 October 1983 p 1330; Harrison Bryan letter to J. Wright, 21 October 1983; NLA Press release 21 October 1983. Although Public Service norms for such situations would not be codified until the Public Service Act in 1999, they were based on long understood proprieties which NLA clearly breached on these occasions. The 1999 guidelines state that "employees of the agency must not make statements that presume the 'guilt' or otherwise of the accused employee."

²⁹¹ Beverley Miller at the Canberra Times thought otherwise: "Library officials were engaged yesterday in behind-the-scenes lobbying moves to retain control of the archive. Those enlisted in the manoeuvres, which involve appeals to the library's charter which gives it custodial rights over collections of Australian books, photographs, historical paintings, maps and films, include the former director-general of the library, Sir Harold White, and the chairman of the library's governing council and national president of the Liberal Party, Dr Jim Forbes. (Beverley Miller, "Film Head Critical of Library's Archive Role," Canberra Times 20 Sep 1983)

²⁹² NLA Council Report 2618, 2 December 1983. These kits were sent under cover of personalised proforma letters inviting the recipient to lobby politicians and the media (see sample Appendix 9). These, with the press releases and other obvious lobbying activity, would presumably have been organised by the NLA Council Secretariat,

their own, refuting the NLA's arguments. Senator Hamer, for example, released his own information kit on 19 October, which forensically dissected the NLA's kit of six days earlier.

As justification for retaining the NFA and SR, the NLA and its supporters,²⁹³ with some unanimity, cited its track record without recognising, or caring about, the self-contradiction. The NLA had started archiving films long before anyone else cared, it had saved half a million sound recordings from destruction (although it had castigated Peter Burgis for acquiring so many in the first place), it had racked up many notable achievements, like *The Last Film Search*, through the work of dedicated librarians (the very same librarians publicly favoured the NFA's autonomy), NFA and SR had always received their fair share of the NLA's limited budget, the NLA was the victim of an orchestrated campaign by a "self interested film industry"²⁹⁴ and self-seeking staff.²⁹⁵ By September and October 1983, the claims verged on the conspiratorial, with repeated references to unidentified "sectional interests" intent on controlling the NFA. Just how these interests proposed to control what would still be a public institution, regardless of its organisational form, was unclear. However, the references were sufficiently insistent to prompt Senator Hamer to ask Minister Cohen:

I refer to a recent National Library kit which was circulated to all Members of Parliament and Senators. The covering letter from the Director General of the

under Ted Vellacott's direction. If so, as a former head of FD, he would have understood the quality of the arguments being circulated.

²⁹³ For example, the Library Association of Australia, AACOBs, NLA Council and management, Canberra Times

²⁹⁴ "Preserving Records [1]."

²⁹⁵ "In recent months there has been a deliberate build-up of adverse publicity and misinformation in an attempt to separate the film archive and the sound recording section from the National Library....a few library staff became disaffected because of a lack of resources. Some had developed, apparently concurrently, a grand vision of two independent statutory authorities and the power and plum jobs which they believed would eventuate....film makers clearly recognise the commercial value of the film archive. They want to control it. After a previous state of siege over the film archive, the National Library had established a film advisory committee...proposed by disenchanted members of staff. Strong attempts were made to lobby Mr Cohen [and the Prime Minister] by those representing film interests and the embryo Australian Goldwyns, Mayers, Zanucks and Zinnemans.....Whatever the end of the story...what has gone on should be seen as sinister, ruthless and exploitative" Cannon, "Film, Sound Archives in State of Siege." 'Judy Cannon is a freelance journalist who has recently been working for the National Library'.

National Library makes reference to the promotion of “sectional interests” in regard to the separation of the National Film Archive from the National Library.

First, was the Minister informed of the circulation of the kit before it took place? Will the Minister identify the “sectional interests” for the Senate? Who are the people referred to in the letter? In what way are they seeking to promote their own interest? What evidence exists to support this?

Can the Library provide a second information kit which contains more concrete evidence than its own press releases and an editorial from the Canberra Times – since editorials cannot be attributed to particular people or identified with “sectional interests”?²⁹⁶

In his response, when it came, the Minister adroitly batted the questions on to the NLA to speak for itself. There is no record that it ever answered them, and it produced no follow up information kit. But neither the NLA nor anyone else made further reference to these unspecified interests during the public debate.²⁹⁷

Whether it had intended to or not, the NLA and its supporters had not only alienated the NFAAC, and the industries and community which it was the Committee’s mandate to liaise with, but had communicated the impression that it was fighting a rearguard action to hang on to NFA regardless. Understandably the Council was fearful that its loss would create a precedent for detaching other specialist areas from the institution²⁹⁸. In public relations terms, it was both disastrous and revealing.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Senate Hansard, 10 November 1983, p 2451. In his 1989 oral history recording Harrison Bryan does infer that members of the NFAAC, Bob Hogg, Mike Lynskey and myself are among these interests. He also claims that Hazel Hawke’s name was “used very vigorously” in a pretty solid campaign. I have found no instance of Hazel Hawke’s name arising anywhere in this context. Bryan, Harrison Bryan Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

²⁹⁷ But it continued to privately believe and promulgate conspiracy theories. A miscellany of quotes is set out in Appendix 9.

²⁹⁸ Harrison Bryan speech to NLA staff, 10 April 1984; “some unscrupulous or short sighted specialist interest might be emboldened by the events of the past year to embarrass the Government by such a proposal” *NLA Annual Report 1983-84* p. vi

²⁹⁹ An extensive report by Ian Healy, the NLA’s own publicist of many years, upon his departure in February 1984 provides an insight into the character of the NLA at this time, and a context to the manner in which the NLA handled its public relations. Healy pointed out that he had never received any useful direction, and that the NLA had “never set an overall publicity policy and almost never indicated what it wanted. The guess has to be hazarded that it does not really know what it wants. The last ‘instruction’ [he] received was about five years ago, when he was asked to place emphasis on the Australian Studies branch. This has continued to be done... The Library seems to want publicity and not want it at the same time. Its posture is enigmatical and impossible to define. It is unhappy that people are not more aware of its services and is dissatisfied, puzzled or plaintive when particular items or activities are ignored by the media The official attitude seems to be that publicity (and public relations outside the

A draft Cabinet submission was circulated in early 1984 which recommended the setting up of a new institution based on NFA and SR. The inclusion of SR apparently came as a surprise to the NLA Council, even though it had been articulated in the AFI conference the previous September and must surely have become part of DHAE discussion thereafter.³⁰⁰ The NLA Council Chair was notified on 3 April of the Government's intention to proceed with the NFSA, and Forbes and Bryan had their "one and only audience with the Minister on the topic" on 5 April, the day of the announcement. The Minister attended a meeting of the NLA Council the next day at which, according to Bryan, "he assured us that the creation of the NFSA was 'an action which he had not initiated'."³⁰¹

The continuing controversy had opened the gates to wider public criticism. In the wake of a one-day staff strike and a three month TLC picket on the NLA building (July – September 1983) over the Library's handling of structural concerns about asbestos, the *Bulletin* reported concern about its map collection and the resignation of its curator³⁰²,

fundamental, traditional library services) are unfortunately necessary, but are really not much to be worried about.....[The Library] is extremely status-conscious. There is a mysterious element of secrecy, not merely what is usually understood to be 'lack of communication', but which indicates that some officers have yet to learn to trust their 'official voice'.... "Two areas, at least, offer so much newsworthy material that they clearly demand publicity officers of their own [Australian Studies branch and the Film Section]. The film area's self-engendered publicity seems to be well received – its publicity output should be professionally managed.

Healy noted that he had been left without essential staffing support, had to "wait for a year for his most essential tool of trade – a typewriter – only to receive one that was still not good enough for him to type his own news releases, [and to] wait two years for cardboard so that publicity photographs could be mailed". (Healy, Review of Publicity/Public Relations Activity in the National Library. pp 1,2,8)

I can recall that Healy would come to me regularly to ask if I had any stories for him, because he was getting nothing from elsewhere in the NLA. I was impressed by his capacity to judge the potential of a story and accurately predict whether he could, for example, get it on the front page of *The Australian* or *The Sydney Morning Herald*. His journalistic success suggested he also had a well honed network of contacts.

³⁰⁰ "To almost universal astonishment, [it] was designed to cover not only films but also sound recordings. The Council's official comment on the draft was to recommend a full dress enquiry in the tradition of the Paton Committee of 1957. Though this suggestion was not seriously taken up, the proposed new institution did not secure the universal support of the commenting Departments. However the time was well and truly past for any change of heart by the Government." Bryan, No Gray Profession.

³⁰¹ "I was quite prepared to believe him. In fact, I seriously doubted if he had done anything except just let it all happen. I wondered if he cared one way or the other." Bryan, No Gray Profession.

³⁰² Fia Cumming, "Cartographers Condemn National Library," The Bulletin.

and an academic, Peter Biskup, published a feature article in the *Financial Review* which cited low staff morale, the NLA's "loss of a sense of purpose and direction" and "lack of long range priority ranking to its goals"³⁰³. He called for an enquiry along the lines of the Paton committee.³⁰⁴ These two pieces brought forth some fierce press releases from the NLA³⁰⁵ and led Biskup to write to Harrison Bryan questioning the NLA's commitment to intellectual freedom.³⁰⁶

3.1.14 INDEPENDENCE

On 5 April 1984, Minister Barry Cohen announced to the House the establishment of the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA), a new institution based on the NFA and SR, and initially to be attached to his Department.³⁰⁷ With immediate effect, there was to be a complete separation from the National Library. Relevant staff, resources and collections would be transferred to the new entity. The NFSA would be headquartered in Canberra with offices in Sydney and Melbourne. An Advisory Committee and an Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) would be established to flesh out the consequences of Government's decision and produce a report on its future development. The decision

³⁰³ Biskup, "Fierce Wrangle over Movie Treasure Trove."

³⁰⁴ Paton, Paton Committee.

³⁰⁵ Press releases: "Criticism of the Administration of the National Library" 2 March 1984, and "National Library of Australia – the facts" 3 April 1984. The former rails against "irresponsible" and "mischievous" criticism; the latter condemns its critics' lack of "concern for proprieties" but declares "some standards must be preserved" and then proceeds to give a false explanation for the Map Curator's resignation.

³⁰⁶ Speaking prior to the publication of his article, which he had sent to the Minister and which had since been seen by Harrison Bryan, Biskup said "What I tried to do was to put the affairs of the NLA into a critical perspective and to show that the current maladministration (something anyone whose ego or reputation is not involved can plainly see) was due largely to the historical fact that the library has for too long tried to be all things to all men – an impossible task.....hence the call for a public enquiry into priorities.the tone of your letter, coming as it did on the heels of Sir Harold White's attempt to breathe down my neck and the library council's reported stern disapproval of "irresponsible" criticism, has left me with a sensation of slight unease. What is the precise distinction between "responsible" and "irresponsible" criticism?I find it disturbing that accusations of irresponsibility should come from an institution which should be the first to upholdthe noble pronouncements made by your and my profession on the subject of intellectual freedom and the need for a well informed citizenry." Letter Peter Biskup to Harrison Bryan, 6 March 1984. Many years later, Biskup apologised to Harrison Bryan Bryan, No Gray Profession. Appendix 7

³⁰⁷ House of Reps Hansard 5 April 1984 p 1489

was welcomed by the constituency of the new institution – and well wishers included Kenneth Myer, former chairman of the NLA Council, who believed it to be a “wise long term move”.

On the morning of 10 April 1984, Harrison Bryan addressed the assembled NLA staff. He made it clear that the NLA would “loyally support” the Government’s decision and implement the necessary transition arrangements. But from his measured delivery, with its inclusions and exclusions, his own view on the course of events was clear enough.³⁰⁸ The Task Force would be redeployed to other areas of the Library, but no assurance was offered to the permanent staff of NFA and SR, who suddenly no longer “owed their loyalty” to the NLA. A month later, on 11 May 1984, the formal transfer of staff and resources to the DHAE took effect. Departmental Secretary Pat Galvin officially welcomed the fifteen people who would form the nucleus of the new NFSA.³⁰⁹

In his memoirs, Bryan speculates on the motives of the “protagonists of the NFSA”. He was convinced from seeing the NFAAC in action “that there were interested parties who saw the possibilities of gaining more control over a new institution than they have been able to exert over the Library.” As for the NLA staff involved, “Jim Forbes described

³⁰⁸ “Some of you [will] think that what has happened is some kind of humiliating defeat for the Library. I urge you not to take that view.... Whether or not any of us agree that the particular decision was wise or far-sighted is beside the point....it is quite pointless to comment on the decision itself or the way it was arrived at (spoken emphasis is apparent in the audio recording)....we pointed out to the Minister that there was something very close to a crisis in confidence in the Library, both within the Library and in terms of our supporters and users outside. Inevitably, there have been some harsh things said during the media discussion that led up to this decision. The Library has been smeared, and I’m not referring necessarily to the immediate protagonists in the discussion, and some of that smear also sticks.”

He went on to stress how much everyone owed “at least some basic shreds of loyalty” to the National Library as their employer, and added that despite the criticism, overt and implied, there had also been handsome tributes paid to its work in developing NFA and SR, underscoring the fact that these were regarded as important enough for “takeover bids” to be put in: “...this result was only achieved by a considerable amount of dedicated hard work on the part of people in both areas in the Library, and.... also on the part of the members of the Task Force who put in such hard work in both areas cheerfully and well in conditions that could only be regarded as quite disruptive.” Harrison Bryan, [Harrison Bryan Addresses National Library Staff], rec 10 April 1984.

³⁰⁹ Yet NLA management ignored the occasion: despite their individual contributions to the National Library over many years, there would be no official farewell for the departing staff. The historic opportunity to mark the end of a 49-year era in the NLA’s history was missed. While we would continue to occupy the existing work areas for several months until the NFSA found premises of its own, I and my staff were suddenly in an alien land.

them simply as Quislings." They were undoubtedly fostering the move for independence and "it would have been surprising if there had not been at least some element of personal ambition involved."³¹⁰

In recounting the prehistory of the NFSA in its report, *Time in our hands*, the NFSAAC summarised the rationale for the NFSA:

The move towards autonomy...had not simply been a quest for greater resources to do its job, however desperate may have been that need. It was fundamentally a quest for identity and recognition of an area of national activity that had outgrown the possibilities of its original administrative setting and now needed a new one of its own making. The child had grown up and it was time to leave the parent.

In his book *The Life of the Party*, Arts Minister Barry Cohen wrote that the NFSA was established largely through the efforts of Bob Hogg and the intervention of the Prime Minister, and that history would show it as one of the most far-sighted heritage decisions made by the Hawke Government.³¹¹ Hogg was neither a politician nor a bureaucrat, but as the senior advisor to the Prime Minister he was in a position to maintain an awareness of the departmental process and to represent the Government's expectations in the course of it. He became involved³¹² in the issue following the publication of the *Bulletin* article on August 16, and without his facilitation behind the scenes, including requesting detailed briefing papers from me, the outcome may have been quite different. He summed up the experience:

³¹⁰ Bryan continues "Ray Edmondson and I had several discussions on the part he played. He was and is very knowledgeable and competent in the film area and certainly concerned to preserve Australia's film heritage and make it available. I could not accept his further proposition, freely admitted, that this concern outweighed any loyalty to the institution whose employee he was." Bryan, *No Gray Profession*. On the other hand, Jean Whyte, now a member of NLA Council, had said in 1975: "The professional's first loyalty is to the aims of his profession....a professional has a professional responsibility and ours is to see that people get the information and access to the materials that they need or want." Jean Primrose Whyte, "Reflections on Some Problems," (1975)

³¹¹ Barry Cohen, *The Life of the Party* (Penguin, 1988). p 151

³¹² Hogg maintained his interest in NFSA. Some years later he served a term on its Interim Advisory Council.

It was a rather instructive period for myself in observing at close hand the bureaucracy working to thwart the clear objective of the Government. Fortunately in this case their efforts were not productive.³¹³

Reflecting on the separation after his retirement, Harrison Bryan said:

I must make it clear that the National Library Council – that I – did not see the archival film and sound collections go without a murmur. That operation had all the characteristics of rape: the cynicism, the utter lack of scruple and the plain treachery that accompanied that particular crime against society. We were certainly outgunned and outmanoeuvred. We were indeed rolled by experts. Clearly we were not helped by our scrupulous – some thought over-scrupulous – concern for the proprieties, which kept, from well-wishers and critics alike, the detail of our very real attempts both to maintain services in this area in the face of something very close to sabotage and to dissuade the government from the course it was being so publicly urged to adopt. On one thing we should be clear, the Library's concentration on ABN had very little to do with the establishment of the NFSA – other, that is, than as a weapon for our opponents.³¹⁴

Finally, Don McMichael, writing in 2001, felt the NFSA's creation was vindicated:

I have to confess to being one of those who resisted the establishment of the National Film and Sound Archive in 1983 when I was both a member of the Council of the National Library and Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs and Environment. To some of us, the separation of the Archive from the National Library did not seem like a good idea at the time, but events proved how wrong we were. In my view Screensound Australia, as it has developed under its several Directors but always with your guiding hand to point the way, has become one of the great national collecting institutions – something which I believe would not have happened had the collections remained under the aegis of the National Library.³¹⁵

The NFSA had gained its autonomy, but the NLA's conduct, and its construction on the unfolding saga as an unscrupulous, orchestrated film industry conspiracy, was perhaps

³¹³ Letter from Bob Hogg, 1 May 1984

³¹⁴ Jean Primrose Whyte and Neil A Radford, eds., An Enthusiasm for Libraries: Essays in Honour of Harrison Bryan/ with a Rejoinder by Harrison Bryan (Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1988). The reference to ABN presumably refers to: Biskup, "Fierce Wrangle over Movie Treasure Trove."

³¹⁵ Personal letter from Don McMichael at the time of my retirement from the NFSA in 2001. As Departmental Secretary, McMichael was automatically a member of the NLA Council, a fact which gave the NLA an advantage over the other collecting institutions in the portfolio. He subsequently became Director of the National Museum of Australia.

more eloquent about the state of the NLA than about the events per se.³¹⁶ That this belief could become embedded, unchallenged, in the psyche of the NLA for years to come, and poison its relationship with the NFSA, was immensely sad, even if this “ill wind” was to have a positive outcome for another undervalued activity. The departure of NFA and SR gave a direct boost to the development of the NLA’s oral history program.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ In his oral history, Harrison Bryan puts his construct on the series of events which led to the separation of the NFSA. He sees some members of NFA staff, the NFAAC and the Prime Minister’s chief advisor, Bob Hogg, as being at the centre of an orchestrated conspiracy – “we were rolled by experts”. He admits he is speculating. Even allowing for the vagaries of memory, his speculations do not accord with documented evidence. He says he was not so much concerned at the outcome (a new institution) as the “unscrupulous” way it was done. “I persuaded the Council that we had to behave with perfect propriety – we were never given any credit for having a balanced view – the depressing thing was that they thought they couldn’t have achieved any result if they’d followed the normal channels”. He saw the NFA as a small unit of Australian studies and saw the virtue of keeping material together in the interests of scholarship. If he had allowed the NFA to have a separate letterhead it would have created a storm of protest within the NLA. Bryan, Harrison Bryan Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

³¹⁷ Barry York, “Impossible on Less Terms’: The Oral History Collection,” Remarkable Occurrences ed. Peter Cochrane (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001).

3.2 TRANSITION AND ESTABLISHMENT: 1984 -86

Between April 1984 and early 1986, the NFA and SR had to be detached from the NLA, physically relocated, and become a new and recognised cultural institution. This had to be accompanied by the creation, facilitation, deliberation and reporting back of two committees, the National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee (NFSAAC) and the IDC, which would flesh out the NFSA's role and its desired development path.

3.2.1 THE TRANSITION: 1984

When the announcement of NFSA's creation was made in Parliament on 5 April 1984, there were, not surprisingly, some dissident and cautionary comments from some members and senators. In the light of subsequent events, it is relevant to note some responses to the Minister's announcement.

Senator Kathy Martin, Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, noted that several organisational options for the NFSA had recently been canvassed, including placing it with AA or the AFC. She had reservations about the latter because "it is a participant in the film industry and the users of the film archives are not only the film industry" and felt the best alternative would have been to make it a statutory authority. Placing the NFSA under the DHAE was the worst option of all:

.....[This decision] will remove the archives from whatever independence it enjoyed as part of the National Library and make it part of the bureaucracy. Additional overhead costs will be necessarily be incurred...it does not assure any form of independent cultural development...and runs all the risks inherent in becoming part of the bureaucracy....It is an extraordinary thing when something like an archive, which is an important national research resource, is placed in the

bureaucracy. Only time will tell whether this arrangement will meet any of the criticisms of the previous one – that is, placing it within the National Library.³¹⁸

Steele Hall MP echoed Martin's concern about the NFSA's attachment to the bureaucracy, adding

...the Government should not be surprised if public reaction is sceptical about the haste, the lack of consultation and the very great expense that will be incurred in this particular arrangement.³¹⁹

Manfred Cross MP, who was a member of the NLA Council, seemed to acknowledge that there *was* a problem of separate identity to address, but this was not the way:

One of the arguments of the people who sought to establish a separate national film and sound archive was the fact that the film and sound archives were submerged within the National Library, a statutory corporation, and had no separate identity. I do not think that the decision made at this time has addressed the problem, and I do not think that it is the last that the Minister will hear of the problem.³²⁰

On the role of the new institution, the NLA Council "sought and received written assurances from the Minister as to the commitment of the NFSA to the responsibilities laid on the Library in the National Library Act in respect of Australian films and recordings and as to the support which the NFSA would be given to enable it to carry out that commitment". Its (then) confidential advice to the Minister in October declared "the Council is strongly of the view that it would be quite unsatisfactory to entrust this responsibility [for the NFSA] to the governing control of any vested interest".³²¹ The NLA had interpreted the Cabinet decision to mean that the NFLC would be retained by

³¹⁸ Senator Martin, Senate Hansard 5 April 1984 p 1334-5

³¹⁹ Mr Steele Hall, Reps Hansard 5 April 1984 p 1490

³²⁰ Manfred Cross MP, Reps Hansard 5 April 1984 p 1490.

³²¹ Since the NFSA's holdings would be passing out of the legal ownership of a statutory authority into the legal ownership of a portfolio department it was proper for the Council to seek such assurances. However, the 'vested interests' referred to here and in other contemporary NLA documents, and in the emanations of others in the library community, are never defined. The Council was convinced of their existence and designs. They disappear from discussion after the NFSA's creation. *NLA Annual Report 1983-84* pp 3, 103

the NLA, and it moved quickly to restructure accordingly, also detaching its cataloguing unit for absorption into the NLA's general cataloguing area.³²²

The NFAAC was disbanded on 6 April 1984, immediately following the announcement of NFSA's creation. Subsequently six of its seven former members compiled a report of its activities as a matter of historical record, and for the assistance of the incoming NFSAAC. It made nine recommendations, among other things urging that the NFLC be linked to the NFSA. One of the NFAAC's members, James Malone, was appointed to the NFSAAC, providing a continuity of corporate memory.³²³

The transfer of assets, including collection material, equipment, facilities, furniture, stocks of publications, computer hardware and so on, became a protracted negotiation which took nearly two years to finalise. So did agreeing on a detailed division of functions (for example, who would now publish the national filmography, *Australian Films?*). The physical transfer of collections would take even longer. The NLA ceded control of OGPO to the NFSA, as well as ownership of the nitrate film vaults at Mitchell, but for many years material remained stored in the NLA building.

³²² NLA *Annual Report* 1983-84 pp 11, 12. A contrary interpretation of the Cabinet decision – that the Film Lending Collection be transferred to the NFSA – was initially pursued by the NFSA but opposed by NLA, which was successful in retaining it. As Rod Wallace had long ago pointed out, the NFLC's attachment to the NLA was, if anything, even more anomalous than the NFA. It was a constantly changing lending library, its films and videotapes being consumables with a limited life. It had its own specialised relationships, and an independent computer booking and cataloguing system. It was not linked to the inter-library loan system. It had a largely non-library clientele, and conventional libraries rarely used it. Like some of its state-based counterparts it could have operated as an independent authority. Wallace, "The Film Division - Past, Present and Future," vol. Post-1984, the NLA's real lack of commitment to the service became painfully clear. Progressively reducing its budget, staff and service quality, it finally outsourced the operation to a state authority in Victoria.

³²³ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands* (Canberra: National Film and Sound Archive, 1985). Appendix 8. The seventh member, Harrison Bryan, did not participate.

ESTABLISHING THE NFSA'S IDENTITY: 1984-85

As of 5 April 1984, the NFSA had a name, and two reference points provided by Government: a Cabinet decision and the Ministerial speech announcing the NFSA's advent. Two more would be added: the Minister's terms of reference for the NFSAAC and IDC, and the Prime Minister's speech delivered at the opening of the NFSA's headquarters on 3 October 1984.³²⁴ These were effectively the sources of its mandate.

From this starting point, the NFSA faced several immediate challenges. It was required, in accordance with the Minister's announcement, to find accommodation separate from the NLA as soon as possible. As a practical necessity, it had to establish its own organisational and governance structure. It had an incentive to assert itself and establish its own public identity and image. Other changes notwithstanding, it had to continue with, and expand, its normal work and access services. Beyond these requirements, it had to service two committees: the IDC which would look at coordinating and rationalising the Commonwealth's film and sound collections, and the NFSAAC which would set out the future vision for the NFSA, including recommending relevant legislation. The resulting reports would provide the basis for cementing the NFSA's role within the spectrum of collecting institutions.

Not mentioned in either the Cabinet decision or the Minister's statement, but implicit in both, was the need to establish the NFSA as a professional *concept* differentiated from existing institutions. The organisational and conceptual models for film archives and sound archives existed overseas, although combining the two models would be an innovation and the NFSA, unlike the NLA or AA, would have no direct counterpart within Australia at the state or regional level.

³²⁴ The Cabinet decision was available for reference within the Department and the NFSA; the other documents were published in National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*. pp12, 126-128

3.2.2 ORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE, THE IDC AND *TIME IN OUR HANDS*

In May 1985, Colin Pitson was appointed as Interim Director of NFSA³²⁵. A simple structure was established. NFA became the Film and Television Branch, SR became the Sound and Radio Branch, and a Business Management branch, picking up accounts, personnel and other administrative tasks, was populated with people seconded from elsewhere in the bureaucracy. The NFSAAC, otherwise known as the Long committee after its chair, Joan Long,³²⁶ was appointed by the Minister and met for the first time on 17 August 1984, with instructions to deliver its report within twelve months. Overall, there was a modest but significant increase in budget and staff numbers compared to the allocation under the NLA. After negotiations with DHAE and the Public Service Board, the position of Director was fixed at SES Level 3, appropriate for a small national institution,³²⁷ and advertised.

But by April 1985, a year after the NFSA's formal creation, there had been little progress in developing the NFSAAC's report or progressing the IDC, and internal dissension was fracturing the fragile little organisation. The Departmental Secretary intervened, appointing a new Acting Director, Graham Gilmour, and creating a secretariat within DHAE to service the NFSAAC and IDC³²⁸ and progress their reports. Recruitment of a permanent Director was suspended for the time being. The NFSA gradually settled down to focus on the business of archiving.

³²⁵ Colin Pitson was a SES Level 1 officer and head of the Business Management Branch at AA. He was seconded to this post pending the formal creation of the Director's position.

³²⁶ Joan Long AM was a film producer, writer and historian and had a relationship with the NFA going back to the 1960's, when preparing the script for the compilation documentary *The Pictures that moved*. She was later chair of AFTA.

³²⁷ At the time, the Senior Executive Service had 6 levels. The NFSA Director was approximately at the same level as the Director of the National Maritime Museum, or a First Assistant Secretary Division Head in DHAE.

³²⁸ Graham Gilmour was Assistant Secretary, SES Level 2, Coordination and Management in DHAE. In effect, Pitson and Gilmour swapped jobs. I was seconded to head the NFSAAC secretariat.

The NFSAAC worked rapidly from that point. It had called for public submissions. It held a range of consultations, including a large weekend workshop in May 1985 for a spectrum of stakeholders. Its report, *Time in our hands*,³²⁹ (TIOH) was submitted to Minister Cohen and publicly launched in November 1985. Inter alia, it recommended that the NFSA be made a statutory authority as soon as possible and affirmed the name **National Film and Sound Archive**. TIOH would prove a seminal and far reaching document, laying out policies, principles and strategies, and budgeting, staffing and infrastructure projections that seemed unrealistically optimistic at the time.

The IDC, chaired by the DHAE Deputy Secretary, met for the first time on 19 December 1984 and finalized its report in April 1986. Its terms of reference were simple: “to investigate the Commonwealth’s film and sound collections and to report on methods of rationalising and efficiently managing the Commonwealth’s resources in this area.” In addition to DHAE, twelve Commonwealth agencies participated³³⁰. To some extent, it traversed ground covered by the first stage of NC in 1982-83. This time, there were some clear outcomes which recognised the central and coordinating role of the NFSA as a specialist technical facility, the custodian of preservation copies held on behalf of other agencies, and in establishing common cataloguing standards. The IDC supported NFSAAC’s recommendation that a statutory basis be established for the NFSA. That little was done in succeeding years to implement the IDC’s recommendations might, at least in part, be put down to a lack of resources among government agencies and memory institutions generally. The report did, however, formally recognise the NFSA’s role vis-a-vis other Commonwealth agencies.

Likewise, events and changing circumstances would conspire, for a time, to sideline the most important recommendations of TIOH. There would be a period when, like so many government reports, it was put aside, left to gather dust and even be treated

³²⁹ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*..

³³⁰ AA, ABC, AFC, AFTS, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, AWM, CSIRO, Department of Defence, NFSA, NLA, SBS, Department of Finance

dismissively as time moved on.³³¹ Yet ultimately its vision would be thoroughly vindicated. Whether consciously or not, it is obvious in retrospect that the NFSA has grown more or less exactly along the lines TIOH anticipated, even if more slowly than hoped. Further, with only one major exception³³², almost all of its recommendations have since come to pass, although several, like the recommendation for statutory authority status, took a very long time to happen.



Fig.2: NFSA headquarters building at Acton, ACT, circa 2000 (Photo: Edmondson)

³³¹ Perhaps the NFSAAC was realistic enough to anticipate this, for the concluding paragraph of the report was a quote from Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which read in part:

...there is nothing more difficult to handle nor more doubtful of success nor more dangerous to conduct than to make oneself the leader in introducing a new order of things. For the man who introduces it has for enemies all those who do well out of the old order and has lukewarm supporters in all those who will do well out of the new order. This lukewarmness arises...partly from the incredulity of mankind who do not put their trust in changes if they do not see them in actual practice...

³³² Statutory deposit of audiovisual works in the NFSA is still an unrealised goal, and would accord with world's best practice. It is being pursued.

3.2.3 NFSA AS A PLACE – AND AN IMAGE

The NFSA in Canberra was required to find separate accommodation from the NLA “as soon as possible”³³³. A purpose designed building was out of the question, yet it was strategically important for the NFSA to have a recognisable public building like the other collecting institutions, as opposed to floor space in some anonymous office block. Investigations revealed that the old Institute of Anatomy building, a Canberra landmark, might soon be available. The Institute itself was on the verge of closure, and other tenants were nearing the end of their leases. Although designed as a public museum for anatomical specimens, the building was adaptable to the purposes of the NFSA, and the extensive grounds offered scope for expansion. Minister-to-minister negotiations secured the building, with some resources for refurbishment³³⁴. Like its peers, the NFSA was now a *place*. Moreover, it was now the custodian of an important heritage building already familiar to large numbers of Australians.

On 3 October 1984, the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, officially opened what was now the refurbished NFSA building. It was, by any standard, a star-studded occasion, with the necessary formalities being leavened by carefully chosen entertainment.³³⁵ For the NFSA’s long time supporters the evening was a celebration, and when packaged as a television special it helped to announce the fact that the NFSA had “arrived.”³³⁶ In preparation for this opening event, the basic elements of a corporate image had been

³³³ House of Reps Hansard 5 April 1984 p 1489

³³⁴ Cohen, *The Life of the Party*, p 151: Cohen’s recollection is inaccurate – the building was acquired while Colin Pitson, not Graham Gilmour, was Interim Director. There had been an earlier proposal for the building to be assigned to the then newly established Museum of Australia as a temporary home but this did not happen. Interim Council of the Museum of Australia, *The Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia* (Canberra: 1983)..

³³⁵ Following the Prime Ministerial speech, comedian Max Gillies did his celebrated Bob Hawke impersonation, and a good time was had by all, especially the Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance, John Dawkins, who launched the NFSA’s first ‘product’ – a limited edition poster.

³³⁶ We were advised by those knowledgeable in such events that the acceptance rate from invitations would be about one quarter. 1500 invitations were dispatched, 500 acceptances were received, about 750 people actually turned up. VIPs were delivered to the front steps in a cavalcade of vintage cars. When I ran the television special at the FIAF congress in April 1985, some delegates were visibly shocked that we would ridicule our head of government in such a way. Sponsorship covered much of the cost of the event.

assembled, including the kookaburra logo that would identify the NFSA for the next fifteen years. The first issue of the NFSA newsletter followed in December 1984, along with *Dressed to thrill*, its first public exhibition. It was a modest beginning, but the NFSA had now joined Canberra's tourist attractions.

MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY

As well as moving out of the National Library building, the NFSA was required by the Cabinet decision to establish offices in Melbourne and Sydney, a move that was not only a practical necessity in a country as big as Australia with its scattered population centres, but which echoed earlier debates on the rival claims of Sydney and Melbourne as the logical home for an autonomous archive. The inevitable political answer was that the Archive had to be in all three places, but headquartered in Canberra like most other national memory institutions. The Melbourne office was established in 1984, co-locating with the AFI. The Sydney Office followed in 1985, co-locating with the city office of AA. Each began as a one-person operation, providing limited access and liaison services, but each grew and progressively established its own presence and relationships with the local audiovisual communities.

Like the Canberra headquarters, each of these offices was a place in its own right, and has accrued its own history. Those histories, including the practical difficulties of operating a multi-locational institution, are outside the scope of this study, but the NFSA's presence in Sydney and Melbourne was not only crucial for its identity, visibility and accessibility: it was also to prove crucial to building a stakeholder base. As one Melbourne researcher recalled:

For me (and for others, I'm sure), a turning point was the establishment of the Melbourne office. It meant that I could organise to view or consult without having to plan my whole life around a trip to Canberra.... whenever there was a financial crisis for the Archive, the Melbourne office would be threatened and I (and all the other regular Melbourne clients) would go into lobby mode. Was

this, maybe, why Melbourne people [in later years] were so prominent in Archive Forum?³³⁷

3.2.4 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Underlying this visible activity was the crucial issue of establishing the NFSA's professional identity and developing its role in the spectrum of cultural institutions. As part of the NLA, the NFA and SR had collected 'library materials' as authorised in the NLA Act, and each looked overseas for their models in the then entirely separate film archiving and sound archiving communities.³³⁸ But as an autonomous institution aiming to comprehend the whole audiovisual spectrum – film, radio, television, sound recording – and to be no longer bound by the concept of 'library materials', which excluded, for example, objects and technology, it could reference no single existing model. It would have to pioneer, and define itself from first principles, rather like its predecessor of 1935, the NHFR.

To put this task into contemporary perspective, other collecting institutions were burgeoning at this time. The Australian National Gallery (NGA) had opened in 1982, the Archives Act had been passed in 1983, and extensions to the NLA building got underway in 1984. The Museum of Australia (NMA) would construct its first administrative and display facility, a visitor centre, in 1985, the Australian National Maritime Museum (NMM) Bill began its passage through parliament in 1986. Museums, libraries, art galleries, even archives in the traditional sense, were familiar concepts with many exemplars. They had all been around since colonial times. They readily evoked an image, a professional aura. But who knew what a national film and sound archive was? These were twentieth century media. There were no colonial or state-based

³³⁷ Email from Ina Bertrand, 27 September 2011

³³⁸ Represented by FIAF and IASA

counterparts. The exemplars were overseas, and in any case the NFSA, at the time, was a unique concept.

In his speech at the opening of NFSA's headquarters, the Prime Minister put it like this:

[The NFSA] is *a new kind of national institution*, devoted to the popular cultural expression of our age, and dedicated to the preservation of some of the best manifestations of Australian character and imagination...The establishment of the NFSA is the expression in institutional terms of a need, long felt by both participants and observers, to guarantee the preservation and availability of this fragile but vital heritage. Its establishment is a cultural landmark for Australia. It has made clear the Government's intention to see this work given the status and resources it deserves, as well as to see long term problems addressed and solutions found.³³⁹

As the NFSAAC sought to flesh out this vision, it set out the scope of the institution and the size of the task ahead in its "Charter for a new institution":³⁴⁰

For the first time there is a national body whose primary task is the archiving of that whole [audiovisual] heritage *in its own right*. It does not have the conceptual, geographic, commercial or practical constraints which characterize other bodies or individuals. Part of the task of the Archive will be to compensate for what others do not or cannot do.

Our consultations have revealed the extraordinary range of demands and expectations which the Archive faces..... So huge is the task ahead that in some cases it will take years for an adequate response to be provided.

We have recognised the [NFSA's] need, as a new institution, for a fundamental statement of concepts and philosophies [which] draws on the lessons of history...properly reflects principles basic to public collecting institutions generally, as well as those of specific concern to such bodies as IASA and FIAF. It should recognise that what happens to be the case in other countries is not necessarily what is appropriate for Australia.

Despite its uniqueness, the NFSA did not start with the proverbial clean sheet of paper. The staff of the NFA and SR each brought with them their own mental and professional baggage from the past, their post-NLA hopes and aspirations for the future, and the problems of two cultures and systems that did not automatically mesh and which, in the

³³⁹ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*. pp 127-8

³⁴⁰ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*. pp 28-31.

heady days just over, had envisioned two separate institutions instead of a combined entity. The adjustments would be painful and, for some, would take years. Yet the wisdom of the conjunction would be vindicated in time. Other countries would begin to adopt the NFSA model as technological change brought the image and sound media closer together.

3.3 THE DEVELOPING ARCHIVE: 1986 -1999

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section covers the growth of the NFSA as an ‘outrider’ of a portfolio Department, up until 1999. In that year it was re-branded as **ScreenSound Australia** and new issues about its autonomy, character and identity come to the fore which it is convenient to address in a separate section.

Throughout these thirteen years, the NFSA operated by and large as an independent collecting institution, headed by a Director who reported formally to the Departmental Secretary. It was styled as an autonomous, and later semi-autonomous, agency or organisation.³⁴¹ For most of this period – there were two significant gaps in continuity³⁴² -- a ministerially-appointed NFSA Advisory Committee or Council served as a sounding board and had direct access to the Minister. For most day-to-day purposes, it operated like a governing board for the institution, although it could only advise and not instruct the Director. The NFSA had its own budget and, beginning in 1988-89, its own annual report³⁴³ separately from the Department. However, since it was not a legal entity, it could not conclude contracts or acquire property in its own name. During these years my own position was that of Deputy Director of the

³⁴¹ According to *Annual Reviews*, it was an autonomous organisation until June 1990, a semi-autonomous organisation until June 2001, then an operational group in DCITA until June 2003.

³⁴² Having fulfilled its terms of reference, the original NFSAAC disbanded upon the submission of its report in November 1985. Its report recommended the immediate establishment of an Interim Advisory Committee, pending the governing council taking office pursuant to the passage of legislation. In the event, the Interim Committee, later Council, was not established until May 1987. By November 1997 the Council had ceased to function because retiring members had not been replaced and there was no longer a quorum. It resumed in May 1998 after six new members had been appointed to join the two remaining members.

³⁴³ Styled as an ‘annual review’, since the NFSA was not a legal entity, but tabled in Parliament in the normal manner. Before 1988-89, the NFSA’s activities were included in the Departmental annual report.

institution, initially on an acting basis until substantively appointed, at the assistant secretary level.³⁴⁴

NFSA had as its reference points the Cabinet decision, the public statements of the Minister and Prime Minister, and latterly the reports of the NFSAAC and IDC. But unlike its peers, the NFSA lacked the security, authority and autonomy of a statute, and was formally and legally part of the bureaucracy. It therefore had an incentive to establish its practical *essentiality* within the spectrum of national memory institutions. In the shifting sands of politics and the bureaucracy, its father figures and mentors would inevitably move on,³⁴⁵ times would change, and without a statute the potential for re-amalgamation with the NLA, or takeover by another authority, or other changes would remain. The threat would surface more than once in future.

There was considerable expansion of the collection, and in service delivery. There was the struggle to grow staff resources and budget. There were significant problems in acquiring physical accommodation for both, and in creating and housing the necessary technical facilities, often involving makeshift and temporary solutions. Developing a public presence and image involved not only responding to client enquiries, but staging Canberra-based and travelling exhibitions, developing visitor services such as a shop and a café, and planting NFSA firmly on the tourist track.

All this would have to be done without the benefit of enabling legislation.³⁴⁶ Before the NFSA, both the CNL and AA had operated for decades as functioning organisations with

³⁴⁴ Senior Executive Service Level 1, later Level 2.

³⁴⁵ As they did: following an election and a major departmental reorganization, the Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment was superseded by the Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories (DASETT) on 24 July 1987. The NFSA now had a new Minister, a new Departmental Secretary, and was a small fish in a much bigger pond.

³⁴⁶ Regular newsletters and annual reviews track these developments. Unfortunately, annual reviews become progressively less informative about many aspects of the NFSA's activities, including the work of the Council, staff numbers and the overall size of the collection. By June 1995, staff numbered 173; the collection totalled just under 2 million items (clearly an estimated figure). By June 2009, staff numbered 214, and the collection 1.4 million items.

large, developing collections and user services before achieving their own legislation and permanent public buildings. In contrast, for other institutions such as the NMA, NMM and NGA, legislation came first and buildings and development followed.

NFSA HQ: MCCOY CIRCUIT, ACTON

The NFSA fortunately secured a practical and prominent building within months of its creation.³⁴⁷ Buildings are, by their nature, intimations of stability and survivability. When its Acton building opened in 1931, the Australian Institute of Anatomy no doubt envisaged its own permanence, boasting the young national capital's third public edifice³⁴⁸. Yet by the time the NFSA was created in 1984, the Institute had withered away.³⁴⁹ The NFSA needed to make the building visibly its own by extending and modifying it to reflect its own distinctive character.³⁵⁰

A Cabinet submission to seek approval and funding to extend the building along the lines recommended in TIOH was ready in early 1986. Initially, in the face of a deteriorating economy, the Minister was reluctant to submit the proposal to Cabinet. Then in July 1986, action was further delayed by the launch of the Museums Review³⁵¹.

Even allowing for significant deselection in the intervening years, the two collection figures are probably not comparable, being calculated against different parameters.

³⁴⁷ In Canberra alone, buildings like Parliament House, the NLA, the NGA, the High Court and the AWM are designed for highly specific functions. They articulate the permanency and continuity of these institutions.

³⁴⁸ Preceded by Parliament House and the Albert Hall. The Institute of Anatomy building has acquired heritage status.

³⁴⁹ The Institute was formally abolished on 16 December 1985, its collections passed to the NMA and other recipients.

³⁵⁰ In December 1982, the Interim Council of the Museum of Australia recommended the transfer of the Institute of Anatomy building to the Museum as its initial home. Clearly, this recommendation did not come to pass. Interim Council of the Museum of Australia, The Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia.

³⁵¹ Department of Finance, What Price Heritage? The Museums Review and the Measure of Museum Performance (1989). This was followed by Sport Department of the Arts, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, Sport Department of the Arts, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, , What Value Heritage? A Perspective on the Museums Review and the Performance of Museums (1990). as a rejoinder.

By the time the Review had been completed and debated, the economy was heading for “the recession we had to have” and a building extension for the NFSA would be a low priority indeed.³⁵² The plan was resurrected in 1994, when in October Prime Minister Keating launched the government’s *Creative Nation* cultural policy and announced that \$11 million would be provided to build the extension.³⁵³ Preparations began immediately.

During the years to 1994, the NFSA had acquired a warehouse in the Canberra suburb of Mitchell, and converted it into a climate controlled collection repository. To house the growing staff and activity at Acton, a number of demountable buildings had been added. Film processing and video laboratories had been constructed in the basement of the headquarters building, a use for which it had never been designed. The result was inefficient and unsustainable. It posed risks to the handling of environmentally sensitive collection material, as well as to occupational health and safety. The new extension would replace the demountables and provide purpose designed accommodation for the technical laboratories.

In July 1996, just as construction tenders were to be called, the incoming Howard government made immediate and savage spending cuts, and funding was withdrawn. The NFSA was instructed to find alternative existing accommodation in Canberra. Trade union reaction was swift, citing OH&S concerns. Some interpreted the government’s move as threatening the very survival of the NFSA.³⁵⁴ A year-long search only demonstrated that the most efficient and cost effective solution was to build the

³⁵² Treasurer Paul Keating made his famous “banana republic” statement on 14 May 1986, and “the recession we had to have” was announced on 29 November 1990. The economy was in recession until 1993.

³⁵³ Australian Government, “Creative Nation - Commonwealth Cultural Policy,” (Canberra: 1994), vol.

³⁵⁴ Media statement by Dr Carmen Lawrence MP, 29 August 1996 “Canberra short changed in arts budget”

extension as originally planned. In October 1997 resumption of work was approved³⁵⁵, and the extension was opened by Prime Minister Howard in June 1999.

3.3.2 SEEKING A STATUTE: THE QUEST FOR LEGISLATION

The 1986 Cabinet submission seeking funding for the building extension also proposed legislation to establish the NFSA as a statutory authority. It was delayed initially by the Museums Review; the Minister sought to revive the process in 1989³⁵⁶ and a new Cabinet submission was in preparation in early 1991, but neither the recessionary times nor other contemporary circumstances affecting the NFSA (see ‘colour film crisis’ below) were conducive to proceeding at that point. The arrival of better times brought the launch of *Creative Nation* in October 1994, with its commitment to address the inadequacy of the NFSA’s premises, although not necessarily its legislative needs.³⁵⁷

The Howard government, however, did not favour the creation of new statutory authorities. Under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and the *Public Service Act 1999* the preferred model became the prescribed agency³⁵⁸ or executive agency³⁵⁹. These machinery of government devices conferred a defined measure of financial independence, formal recognition and autonomy beyond the status of a departmental branch or division, but did not require the passage of legislation. Becoming a prescribed or executive agency emerged as the Minister’s preferred

³⁵⁵ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Report.

³⁵⁶ NFSA Interim Council meeting 2 Nov 1989 Agenda paper 27

³⁵⁷ Address by Prime Minister Keating: *Commonwealth Cultural Policy Launch* 18 October 1994

³⁵⁸ An example of a prescribed agency is the Royal Australian Mint, which works, and reports, under its own financial parameters.

³⁵⁹ Part 9 of the Public Service Act refers. An executive agency is established (and abolished) by the Governor General, who may determine its name and specify its functions. For example, National Archives of Australia is an executive agency, not a statutory authority, within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet - notwithstanding that it is also responsible for implementing the Archives Act.

strategy for the NFSA. In March 2000, Minister Peter McGauran and Departmental Secretary Neville Stevens briefed the NFSA's Interim Council³⁶⁰ on the implications of this move, which it was expected would be achieved during the current financial year³⁶¹. NAA had made its own bid for executive agency status, and this was achieved on 28 February 2001. It was expected the NFSA would promptly follow, but once again it would be disappointed. The process was stopped at the last minute in mid-2001.³⁶²

3.3.3 BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATE CULTURE

Part of the NFSA's identity resided in its growing professional culture. Among its peers, librarianship, archival science and museum curatorship were recognised disciplines, defined by university degrees and organised professional associations. In each field, there were a large number of institutions at national, state and local level, and national associations which mandated accreditation standards for their professional members. In the course of career development, individuals moved between institutions and states. Skill sets, values and codes of ethics were part of the culture they took with them.³⁶³ Institutions were led by individuals who had climbed the ladder in their profession, and who contributed to its development through their writings and participation in conferences and other forums.

³⁶⁰ Minutes of ScreenSound Australia Interim Council meeting, 31 March 2000

³⁶¹ Letter to Ron Brent from DCITA Acting Secretary Glenys Roper, 12 January 2000

³⁶² Diary note of conversation 28 August 2001: "the plug was pulled two weeks before it was due to happen". The issue would, in any case, be overtaken at the end of 2002 when the NFSA's future would be embraced in the Government's review of cultural institutions.

³⁶³ In passing, the author records that he has a Diploma of Librarianship (University of NSW) and is an accredited professional member of the Australian Society of Archivists. He is also an individual member of SEAPAVAA, IASA, AMIA and ASRA.

The NFSA lacked most of these advantages. Its core of experienced staff was tiny. It was a stand-alone institution with no state-based counterparts.³⁶⁴ Its professional associations and organisational models were overseas, and none exactly matched its character as a stand-alone film *and* sound archive.³⁶⁵ In 1984 there were no university courses in audiovisual archiving anywhere in the world. The field was an emerging profession. NFSA staff were largely recruited in Canberra, as few seemed attracted from interstate.³⁶⁶ To compensate, the NFSA would have to be self referencing and build its own culture. It inherited from the NFA and SR a proactive sense of mission and urgency, of material waiting to be found and preserved, of an audiovisual industry to engage with, of a need to raise the public stature of the audiovisual heritage, of enthusiasm for the task.³⁶⁷

The successive directors of the NFSA were all career bureaucrats, with no qualifications or background in any of the collecting professions, nor involvement in the advocacy that brought the NFSA into being.³⁶⁸ Here the philosophy of managerialism and the realities of NFSA's status as a division of the Department became clearest. It may be left to get on with its professional work, but it must meet departmental norms and avoid embarrassing its minister. The Director was therefore reliant on the professional knowledge, contacts and judgment of subordinates, as well as their motivations and

³⁶⁴ There was a small state film archive in Perth, as part of the State Library of WA. It was managed by a single staff member.

³⁶⁵ IASA had an Australian branch, which later became the independent Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA). It was a forum for private record collectors and discographers as well as for staff of NFSA and other institutions. It was, and still is, strongly supported by the NFSA.

³⁶⁶ A fact that seemed to support the NFAAC's contention, in 1983, that the NFA should be located in Sydney where the potential staff pool would be much greater. Canberra was a small pool compared to Sydney or Melbourne.

³⁶⁷ It was the constant experience of this writer that visitors commented on the *enthusiasm* of staff for their work, as if they found this unusual in a collecting institution. A sense of this can also be gained from the tabulation of staff members' publications in successive annual reviews.

³⁶⁸ Whether or not this was a deliberate policy is a matter of speculation. Over this period the directors were Colin Pitson (1984-85), Graham Gilmour (1985-92), Ron Brent (1992-2003). None became active in any of the professional associations, and are rarely listed in the tabulation of staff members' publications, as set out in NFSA *Annual Reviews*.

enthusiasms, especially of those experienced staff who had migrated from the NLA. In the 'club' of national collecting institution heads he would likewise be at a disadvantage.

The NFSA's successive committees and councils over this period contained individuals who not only represented stakeholder communities but also brought individual expertise from the audiovisual industries and academia. A number had been activists for NFA or SR during the NLA years. Their contribution to policy, strategic thinking and general scrutiny was very significant. They provided continuity and external perspective, a corrective to isolated and Canberra-centric thinking. But effectiveness diminished over time, as the original 'activists' were gradually replaced. Council meetings became fewer and shorter, and vacancies went unfilled for significant periods.

Like much else in these formative years, professional training evolved from first principles. In conjunction with UNSW's SILAS³⁶⁹ a postgraduate distance learning course in audiovisual archiving was developed. Lecture material and tutoring was largely provided by senior NFSA staff, and the course was delivered on line. The first modules went live in 1998, and the student body included, but went much wider than, NFSA staff.

The NFSA became something of an evolutionary laboratory, fleshing out an organisational model towards which other countries were moving and for which, to some degree, the NFSA would be a reference.³⁷⁰ But it took time for the potential of the NFSA's model to be rediscovered. Given its bureaucratic setting, and its professional and geographic isolation, particular demands were placed on the Director. The Department as well as NFSA staff looked to the Director to serve as a competent chief

³⁶⁹ School of Information, Library and Archival Studies at the University of New South Wales. The course later moved to Charles Sturt University, where it continues to attract students from all over the world. It remains the only postgraduate distance learning course in the audiovisual archiving field. All others are campus-based.

³⁷⁰ New archives in Sweden, Netherlands and Greece were among these, while existing archives broadened their scope: for example, sound archives also embracing video.

executive, but by default he was also the ultimate reference point on curatorial and professional issues, despite lacking background and experience. So the NFSA's sense of identity also relied on the personal professional identity of its most experienced staff. The NFSA was bound to make the mistakes of an immature organisation as issues were faced for the first time.

FILM VS SOUND

In moving from NLA to NFSA, staff moved from their comfort zone to an entirely new and less certain environment where the tendency was to take refuge in old affiliations and past certainties, or engage in defensive tactics. When the NFA and SR were transposed to the NFSA, as the 'film and television' and 'sound and radio' branches respectively, the differences were quickly apparent. There was no congruence between their systems and concepts. The NFA had had the larger staff and budget. It was departmentalised by functions such as selection and acquisition, access, preservation and collection management. SR had not evolved to this extent. The relative economics of operation were vastly different. For former SR staff this was an uneasy environment.

Instead of encouraging a gradual melding of the two groups and methods, the inherited structure entrenched the differences.³⁷¹ Each branch had a separate data base to

³⁷¹ "It was made clear by Peter Burgis and then Dr Jane O'Brian that sound staff were not to communicate with film staff and that...sound had to remain strong against the dominant film section. It was perceived that more funds were allocated to film and that sound were the underdogs. Whenever the Film branch recruited new staff Sound had to have an equivalent. We were also shown at every opportunity the inequality between film and sound in monthly reports, annual reviews etc. I can even remember Peter Burgis counting the number of times the word film appeared in one of our annual reviews and the number of sound related articles in a newsletter.Sound had to be equal to or better than Film. Everything was scrutinised ...space, staff, funds, publicity, reporting in the quest for equality and identity for the Sound Branch.... [even to the extent of wanting] to paint a line down the centre of [the Mitchell warehouse] to separate film from sound.

"There were two separate collection management systems, SONICS (sound) and FLICS (film). [They] coexisted for several years until it was decided NFSA would move from a format to a media based organisation. The systems were merged into a single system, AIMS, which to many looked like FLICS with a few sound-related fields thrown in...the sound staff were reluctant to move from SONICS and it took many months to bring them on board. I realised how destructive the whole 'them and us' culture was and I decided not to be part of it..." (Email from a staff member [identity withheld], 25 January 2011)

manage its collection. Individuals were labeled as ‘film’ people or ‘sound’ people. Some in ‘sound’ saw advantage in pressing for parity with ‘film’ in budget, accommodation, staff numbers, space in the newsletter, publicity profile and so on.³⁷² Over time, this stance was embarrassingly taken into the public arena.³⁷³

What may have seemed a very parochial issue proved to have global implications. When the NFSA hosted the IASA conference in 1992, the question of whether IASA should itself expand to embrace moving image archives became a heated issue. In 1984 the NFSA may have been the first archive to comprehend the whole audiovisual spectrum, but by 1992 it had been joined by others overseas, and archives that had previously confined themselves to audio were now embracing video as well. Ironically, particular NFSA staff, individually influential in IASA, delayed for years the inevitable constitutional change.³⁷⁴ Within the NFSA, the dichotomy was gradually resolved by a combination of retirements, structural change³⁷⁵ and an unexpected crisis which led, among other things, to the introduction of a unified, computerised collection management system which eliminated the barrier between film and sound.

³⁷² As offence was taken at seemingly innocuous symbolism (“Why is it called the National Film and Sound Archive? Why not the National Sound and Film Archive?”) the argument became incapable of rational analysis. It threatened the cohesion of the small institution, of the very concept of an audiovisual archive.

³⁷³ In 1985, Capital 7 television began negotiating with the NFSA for the production of a 12-episode television series about the NFSA’s work and collections, ultimately released in 1988 under the title *The Australian Image*. Without the knowledge of the NFSA Director, the head of the Sound and Radio Branch wrote to Capital 7 to assert that half of the episodes should deal with the NFSA’s sound activities. The action was hugely embarrassing. I had been identified by Capital 7 as the on-screen narrator of the series, and the prospect that a ‘film’ person might helm all the episodes may also have been unwelcome news to ‘sound’ people. In the event, harder heads at Capital 7 judged that an established personality would be a better selling point than an unknown archivist anyway, and hired actor Bill Hunter to host the series. My role became script editor and co-producer.

³⁷⁴ Within Australia, the term “audiovisual” originally suggested slide/tape shows, and today probably has a variety of connotations. From the late 1980s, UNESCO used it to connote the various groupings of film, television, sound and radio archives with which it dealt and to bring them into dialogue with each other.

³⁷⁵ Instead of a structure based on medium (eg film, magnetic tape, disc) the NFSA was rearranged into functions: for example, all selection and acquisition work for all media was placed in a single branch.

3.3.4 THE COLOUR FILM CRISIS AND COMAT

In October 1989 it was discovered that some 40,000 reels of colour film, including the original negatives of some of Australia's best known feature and documentary films, had become damaged by ferrotyping³⁷⁶. They had been held in a temporary store at the NLA, and a malfunctioning air conditioning system had bathed the room in sustained high humidity for an extended period.³⁷⁷ Since much of the film was not owned by the NFSA but held on voluntary deposit for producers who had entrusted their material to the NFSA's care, the matter was extremely serious, from both preservation and legal viewpoints. The commercial value of the material ran into tens, possibly hundreds, of millions of dollars. No problem of this magnitude had ever occurred while the NFA was part of the NLA. The media sniffed out the disaster before the owners of the film had been informed, and the NFSA faced a crisis. Its competence was in question, and producers whose material had been worst affected were among those who had fought hardest for the establishment of the NFSA. It was only a short step from that point to *question whether the NFSA's creation itself had been wise*. Would they have been better off leaving their material with the NLA? Should the NFSA be put back in the NLA?

Such was certainly the tenor of some coordination comments put to Cabinet when an embarrassed Minister had to seek an emergency appropriation of \$4 million to pay for a three year recovery program to treat every affected reel.³⁷⁸ The damage *was* recoverable, but it was not clear that the NFSA's credibility was. And if the NFSA could

³⁷⁶ Film emulsion (the gelatine layer on the side of the film which carries the image) absorbs moisture and in a high humidity environment it expands. If the film is tightly wound the emulsion is compressed between the adjacent film layers and is re-shaped by that compression, creating a visual pattern which interferes with the photographic image. The successive layers of film stick to each other, and in extreme cases the entire film roll congeals into a solid block. This is known as ferrotyping.

³⁷⁷ This was the immediate cause, and it appears that the store was not monitored frequently enough to detect the malfunction in time. But it was an accident waiting to happen. There had never been sufficient staff to rewind all the film rolls into loose 'preservation wind' before storage, which would have prevented such a mishap. Many films were stored in the tightly wound condition in which they arrived at the NFSA.

³⁷⁸ Every affected reel would have to be individually put through chemical processes to reverse the ferrotyping effect. A laboratory infrastructure had to be built to do this.

not retain the trust of the film industry, its future was in doubt. That the nation's film producers, by and large, stood by the NFSA during this traumatic time was a testament to their faith in its necessity.³⁷⁹ But it was also obvious that future mishaps must be averted. The Minister directed the NFSA to get its house in better order, *using its existing resources*. The result was the COMAT program.

COMAT PROJECT³⁸⁰

Following a risk management study, most NFSA staff were redeployed to examine and accession the NFSA's huge backlogs of collection material, and begin reducing the size of the collection³⁸¹. Acquisition and access services, and other discretionary activities, were largely suspended for two years, ending in March 1993. Part of that time would be consumed in retraining staff in new tasks, but by the end almost all the collection would be under inventory control and relocated to acceptable storage. COMAT coincided with the commissioning of a new storage repository in outer Canberra, and the introduction of the AIMS³⁸² collection management system. COMAT did help to create a team spirit and a sense of shared objectives, and the large scale redeployment allowed thoughtful restructuring post-COMAT. It finally removed the reference points that the film vs sound phenomenon fed on.

But collection control came at a price. The withdrawal of access services undermined current productions and alienated clients. An inaccessible NFSA which was also not acquiring material quickly slipped off the radar. Film makers and program producers

³⁷⁹ Ultimately only two depositors withdrew their material from the NFSA's custody.

³⁸⁰ Collection Management Team

³⁸¹ Ron Brent told me at the time that he was under instructions from Departmental Secretary Tony Blunn to reduce the size of the collection.

³⁸² Audiovisual Information Management System. Later dubbed MAVIS (Merged Audiovisual Information System), the system was ultimately licensed to several major audiovisual archives in Europe and North America. AIMS was a specialised inventory system with a cataloguing overlay: philosophically and structurally different to conventional library and archives software, and based on the characteristics of the audiovisual media.

were forced to look elsewhere for source material, and former donors and depositors began to make other arrangements for their holdings. Preoccupied with internalities, COMAT and the colour film restoration program, the NFSA was becoming irrelevant to users and supporters, who were discovering they could get along without it if they had to. It was fertile ground for rumours that the NFSA would never reopen. When it did, the task of rebuilding connections was long and deliberate.

COMAT revealed a measure of unnecessary duplication in the collection, which in turn presented the tasks of deselection and disposal. But it also saw the beginnings of a de facto policy shift which was to profoundly influence internal mindsets. It started with a decision to donate hundreds of reels of nitrate film of European or North American origin to FIAF member archives overseas, on the grounds that the NFSA lacked funds to duplicate this material. Its priority was Australian-produced films. While overseas archives accepted the offer, this contradicted the concept of a NFSA collection comprehensively representing “the moving image and recorded sound heritage of Australia”³⁸³. It also broke up formed collections by removing their ‘non-Australian’ component.³⁸⁴

Over the next ten years, until being decisively reversed in 2004, a de facto ideology took hold. Large quantities of non-Australian films, recordings and literature were deleted from the NFSA’s holdings. It was the equivalent, for example, of removing all non-Australian authors from the NLA, or non-Australian artists from the NGA. Its ultimate expression was a huge sell-off of its vinyl record collection and overseas serials in ‘garage sales’ and on eBay.³⁸⁵ A defining aspect of the NFSA’s identity, which set it apart, for example, from AA and AWM, was its broad approach to acquiring “material of

³⁸³ As set out in TIOH and NFSA’s policy documents

³⁸⁴ Such as the famous Harry Davidson collection

³⁸⁵ An estimated 200,000 recordings were sold or discarded between 2000 and 2003, the rarest ones being auctioned on eBay, with the NFSA newsletter proudly reporting the prices achieved. This created both puzzlement and unfavourable comment. Ostensibly the object was to raise money, but after deducting the administrative costs involved the balance, if any, would have been meagre.

permanent national cultural significance regardless of its country of origin.”³⁸⁶ Films or recordings created overseas not only needed to be accessible to Australians, but might also have distinctive Australian associations. This narrowing not only impacted on the breadth of the collection but also created a conscious gulf between announced policy and actual practice.

Although it had formally established its role in relation to the other national memory institutions, NFSA was nevertheless nationally isolated in many respects. While librarians, archivists, museum and gallery professionals had their national forums for debate and advocacy, the NFSA and its staff were not an automatic fit for any of these bodies. Nor would their concerns be central to those agendas. Some NFSA staff might be individual members, but their areas of interest would be personal rather than corporate. With the partial exception of ASRA,³⁸⁷ which in any case was to some extent dependent on NFSA patronage, there were no national bodies which reflected the agendas of FIAF, IASA and other international forums relevant to the NFSA. It was isolated.

For other national institutions, the geographic isolation of Canberra was mitigated by the activities of state-funded and state-based counterparts, protective of their own territories and support bases, and prone to keep a weather eye on the ambitions of the national body. Senior staff moved around the network as promotions beckoned. The NFSA had no state-based competitors or scrutineers³⁸⁸ so when staff were recruited from interstate they rarely had an audiovisual archiving background. Canberra was remote from the NFSA’s main client and stakeholder base, and the NFSA was often absent from industry forums or other gatherings. It had small permanent offices in Sydney and Melbourne, whose staff felt their own disempowerment through isolation

³⁸⁶ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*. p 61

³⁸⁷ Australasian Sound Recordings Association, formerly the Australian branch of IASA.

³⁸⁸ There were some small state-based collections, such as the State Film Archive of Western Australia, part of the State Library.

from Canberra decision-making. The natural default was to an inward-looking, Canberra-centric mentality, and this impacted public relations and the quality of stakeholder relations.

TIOH recommended that the NFLC should transfer to the NFSA, a practical move which would have kept the NFSA in touch with the NFLC's large client base, including the film society movement and academic users of the Film Study Collection of classic and avant garde films. Such services were sometimes an adjunct to overseas film archives. It would also have kept the NFSA anchored to Australia's unique national network of state government film libraries, and provided the healthy state/national tension it lacked. Regrettably the NLA would not agree to the transfer.³⁸⁹

While the heads of peer institutions were accountable to governing boards, the Departmental Secretary, not the NFSA Advisory Council, was the line supervisor of the NFSA Director. Major decisions and strategies required his approval. Still, the NFSA was small beer in a mega-department, so in practice the Director had considerable autonomy. Provided the NFSA was managed competently, did not generate many complaints or embarrass the minister, and participated in Departmental exercises, the Secretary need not intrude. Relative to the heads of other collecting institutions, therefore, the NFSA Director was in a more powerful and potentially autocratic position. He was effectively the final arbiter in policy, professional, strategic and administrative issues.

³⁸⁹ In 1996 the NLA reviewed its future. An offer from the NFSA to take it over was rejected, and operation was outsourced to the Victorian Government body, Cinemedia, whose director was at the time a member of the NFSA Interim Council. After Cinemedia's demise, a much diminished NFLC was finally acquired by the NFSA in 2004, but without any vestige of its original NLA budget or resource base.

3.3.5 INTERNATIONAL

Given its limitations within the NLA, the NFSA began life as a country cousin in international terms. It lost no time in catching up. Several staff members developed individual reputations in technical, cataloguing and other spheres. It hosted the annual congresses of FIAF (1986) and IASA (1992) and it earned the gratitude of other FIAF members with its nitrate film repatriation project.

It proved to be an innovator. The *Last Film Search* concept was adopted by its New Zealand and British counterparts. The success of the MAVIS software in archives overseas made it the leading product of its type. TIOH and, later, its published operational policies became international reference points. The *Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving* (1998) met a global need and became the standard reference work of its kind.³⁹⁰ By the 1990s the NFSA was a global leader and model rather than a follower.³⁹¹

As envisaged in TIOH, the NFSA did grow its connections with the less developed archives of Asia and the Pacific. Exploratory visits to South East Asian countries led to training seminars organised by the NFSA (1995 to 1997), and sponsored by ASEAN and DFAT. These brought together colleagues from across the region and led to the establishment of SEAPAVAA,³⁹² which filled a niche not covered by FIAF, IASA and other international associations. NFSA had become the largest and most developed audiovisual archive in the region, and the teacher of others.

³⁹⁰ This was the first edition of my book, published by UNESCO. A second edition was published in 2004. It is currently available in nine languages.

³⁹¹ NFSA's creation coincided with the beginnings of the global shift to electronic and, later, digital technology and the resulting technical convergence, and the accompanying shift in UNESCO's thinking which viewed the audiovisual spectrum as an archival whole rather than as compartmentalised 'image' and 'sound' units.

³⁹² South East Asia Pacific AudioVisual Archive Association, established in 1996

3.3.6 PUBLIC RECOGNITION: BUILDING THE BRAND

The NFSA did promote its presence and its brand. Newsletters, leaflets, media releases, a discount loyalty card (launched by Prime Minister Hawke)³⁹³, a television series about its activities³⁹⁴, a shop, a café, an extensive product line³⁹⁵ which reproduced films and recordings from the collection in consumer format. It provided material for the nation's major film festivals. The Canberra headquarters was on the tourist trail, and it fielded exhibitions and a visitor program tailored to school, seniors and other groups, although without an adequate cinema a satisfactory screenings program could not be established.³⁹⁶ External programs included the *Travelling Film and Sound Show* and the *Take 88* travelling exhibition. There were significant sponsored projects.³⁹⁷

Yet, for all its success with special projects driven by curatorial branches, the NFSA's general publicity machine was too often deficient. Newsletters became erratic and regularly changed format. Press releases were too few. An emphasis on nostalgia and tourism was not balanced by promoting the NFSA's professional leadership and growing international stature in, for example, technical standards and computerised collection management. In the writer's opinion, opportunities were missed. A recurrent problem, not confined to the NFSA, was the structural isolation of public relations staff

³⁹³ The "Kookaburra card"

³⁹⁴ Australian Capital Television, [The Australian Image](#).

³⁹⁵ Including feature films, newsreels, vintage radio programs, music and 'regional' videos: footage of rural areas aimed at people living in those parts of the country.

³⁹⁶ The state-of-the-art Arc cinema did not open until 2006.

³⁹⁷ As an example, *Operation Newsreel* was based on a \$4 million sponsorship by News Corporation and the Greater Union Organisation, ultimate owners of the Cinesound and Australian Movietone newsreel libraries. The physical film libraries, containing about 4000 35mm film reels, were donated to the NFSA and the money funded a five year cataloguing and preservation program. The project was launched in 1988 by Rupert Murdoch and Prime Minister Hawke. The head of the project, Annice Vass, was herself a talented publicist who, for most of the project's duration, appeared regularly on television chat shows with examples of the latest newsreel footage that had been restored. As a separately sponsored activity, the NFSA, in conjunction with AFTRS, arranged for student film makers to produce *The Last Newsreel*, the official final issue of Cinesound Review and Movietone News, to bring Australia's newsreel era to a formal close. The reel was released nationally through the Greater Union cinema chain, and throughout the project the Murdoch press was a sympathetic outlet.

from the collection-related branches of the NFSA, and their lack of an informed understanding of their activities.³⁹⁸ It was easy for that isolation to nurture a logic which was detached from the institution's professional milieu.

³⁹⁸ NFSA staff seemed to feel that opportunities were being missed, that public knowledge of the NFSA was poor, that it did not promote what it is, what it does and what it has to offer, and that it was weak on business skills and strategy. (Outcome of a study of staff perceptions by Canberra research organisation EASACT, March 1999)

3.4 REBRANDED: THE SCREENSOUND SAGA – 1999 TO 2003

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

For a five and a half year period the NFSA was rebranded as **ScreenSound Australia**.³⁹⁹ It was during this time that it also ceased to be a semi-autonomous outrider of DCITA, and was ultimately forced into a merger with the AFC. The AFC restored its original name in December 2004. For simplicity, I will keep referring to the institution as NFSA, and will focus on the effects of the rebranding up to the end of the DCITA period. I discuss the NFSA's fortunes under the AFC from mid-2003 to mid-2008 in section 3.5.

The rebranding so profoundly affected the NFSA's profile, relationships and sense of itself that by and large, from June 1999 to June 2003, it *is* the story of the NFSA's identity. Accordingly, little needs adding to cover the NFSA's general operation. The building extension was opened simultaneously with the launch of the new brand. NFSA continued more or less normal operation until July 2003, when it was 'integrated' with the AFC.

The intention of recasting the NFSA as an executive agency has been mentioned. Though much was done during 2000 to arrange the NFSA's financial affairs against this objective, with the Minister predicting⁴⁰⁰ a rapid outcome, the process stopped and

³⁹⁹ The Director at the time, Ron Brent, has affirmed that he was a key driver in the rebranding project and takes full responsibility for the name change. (Email from Ron Brent, 29 September 2011)

⁴⁰⁰ Minister McGauran's advice to Council Chair Susan Oliver, 27 June 2000

reversed, with the NFSA finally being reduced to the status of an 'operational group' within DCITA.⁴⁰¹ After 2000-01 the NFSA no longer published its own Annual Review, and was represented solely as a Departmental 'outcome' within the DCITA annual report. At the end of 2002, the Government instituted a review of cultural institutions (discussed in the next section) which led to the takeover of the NFSA by the AFC in July 2003. The 'ScreenSound period' therefore represents the final phase of the NFSA's life as an attachment to the portfolio department, which had been announced as a temporary arrangement upon NFSA's creation in 1984.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The name *National Film and Sound Archive* was a logical extension from *National Film Archive* and was assigned by government in joining NFA to SR. During 1985 the NFSAAC reviewed the name and concluded:

As a unique institution the Archive cannot use any of the popularly established institutional concepts to describe itself. It will have to work to establish its own. The name *National Film and Sound Archive* is an accurate but not sufficient description of its activities and role, and the word *archive* has musty connotations which are the antithesis of its real character. Though the present name has a number of shortcomings we have not been able to improve on it and do not recommend a change. This may reflect the dilemma of establishing a popularly understood concept: there is not yet a single word which describes such an institution.⁴⁰²

In June 1989, the NFSA Advisory Committee again reviewed the question of the name, referring it on to its successor, the NFSA Interim Council which, with wider terms of reference, replaced it in November 1989. The discussion paper⁴⁰³ canvassed the descriptors used by film archives and sound archives overseas – terms such as

⁴⁰¹ This was unlike the National Archives of Australia, then part of the DCITA portfolio, which was established as an Executive Agency on 28 February 2001.

⁴⁰² National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*, p 113

⁴⁰³ Agenda paper 89/24, 1 June 1989. It was prepared by the Deputy Director, which means it was presumably written by me, though I do not recall the circumstances which prompted its preparation.

cinematheque, filmmuseum, phonotheque and *institute* – and on the basis of experience over the previous five years, it noted some ‘perceived’ problems. The present name was too long, did not identify nationality, was media specific and didn’t include radio, television and video. NFSA got confused with Australian Archives (AA), an entirely different institution. It proposed that a good institutional name should be short, self-explanatory, memorable, distinctive and free of confusing connotations. There was, however, no simple answer. The report did not recommend a new name. It proposed the Committee consider the matter and “record any views on the subject.” Since no views appear to have been subsequently recorded, it seemed the Interim Council either did not want to take the matter any further or that it felt the present brand could not be improved on.

3.4.2 A NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL

The matter lay dormant for a decade, during which the NFSA’s identity continued to establish itself. But it emerged again in mid-1997 when work on the building extension began, and the question of the NFSA’s brand figured in recruitment interviews for the head of the Public Relations Unit.⁴⁰⁴ In May 1998, NFSA Director Ron Brent sought to reopen the issue with a revived NFSA Advisory Council.⁴⁰⁵ Unlike the original NFSAAC, and before that the NFAAC, most members were new to the NFSA, were unaware of its history, had no link to the struggle for separation from the NLA, or indeed any link with memory institutions at all. In his paper, Brent cited surveys indicating that only five per cent of Australians had heard of the NFSA, despite its wide audience reach. He wanted to review its name and its logo.⁴⁰⁶ The new Council agreed that he should develop a

⁴⁰⁴ The successful applicant, Tim Cansfield-Smith, remembers discussion about the name and brand, and his thoughts on them, being part of the job interview, around May/June 1997. (Email from Tim Cansfield-Smith, 15 October 2011)

⁴⁰⁵ Lapsing appointments since its last meeting in November 1997 had left the Council without a quorum. When it reconvened there were six new appointments, including a new chair, and only two continuing members.

⁴⁰⁶ One can only speculate about the influence of external factors, but Brent and I were acutely aware that the venerable British National Film and Television Archive – since 1935, a model and beacon for archives the world over, including the NFSA – had just been dismantled and absorbed into the generality of its parent, the British Film

strategy for rebranding the NFSA, and that the Minister should be alerted that Council may put forward suggestions on this matter.⁴⁰⁷ Whether other possible causes, such as traditional underperformance in the NFSA's publicity activities, were the real problem was not discussed.

Brent also briefed Council on a proposal to establish a fund-raising NFSA Foundation.⁴⁰⁸ For the next year, the Foundation would be a continuing agenda item, as the Council tried to discern its own potential legal obligations and relationship to this planned body, and to understand how a Foundation could work with the NFSA's current status as an outrider of a Government department.⁴⁰⁹

The Council reconvened on 28 August 1998.⁴¹⁰ Brent received Council's agreement to engage Keystone Corporate Positioning to undertake a scoping study, as a prelude to a more comprehensive assessment of the possibilities of rebranding and repositioning the NFSA.⁴¹¹ Reviewing the results at its 7 December 1998 meeting, Council suggested the real issue might be a more coordinated approach to marketing, promotion and

Institute, and its holdings re-badged as BFI Collections. The news stunned the archival world. Tragically, it would prove the first of many rebrandings and reorganisations and its current descendant, the BFI National Archive, is a shadow of its predecessor.

⁴⁰⁷ Resolution 35/4, minutes of Council meeting 29 May 1998

⁴⁰⁸ A promotional brochure had been produced, and a survey to gauge reactions to various names for the Foundation was underway. The Minister was to host a lunch on 26 June to recruit a Board of Governors who would in turn recruit members to the Foundation. In the event, this never happened.

⁴⁰⁹ Minutes of Council meeting 29 May 1998, and subsequent meetings on 7 December 1998 and 26 February 1999

⁴¹⁰ Minutes of Council meeting 28 August 1998, item 6:

"BRANDING" AND REPOSITIONING OF THE ARCHIVE/ ARCHIVE FOUNDATION

Mr Brent said that he believed that this was one of the most critical strategic issues for the organisation. There are significant parts of the production industry which do not know enough about the Archive. He asked Council members to endorse the proposal to engage professional assistance in assessing the possibilities of rebranding and repositioning of the Archive. Mr Brent briefly went through the three proposals received and recommended that Keystone Corporate Positioning be engaged to undertake a brief scoping study that would, in effect, identify what a more comprehensive study should encompass.

⁴¹¹ Resolution 36/3

education, rather than rebranding.⁴¹² In acquiescing to Brent's request that issues including improved promotion be explored, including whether the NFSA name and/or logo could be changed to something more effective, the Council agreed "that the Archive proceed to the next phase of the branding process through further research".⁴¹³

The Council's decision was interpreted generously. When it met on 26 February 1999, Chair Susan Oliver asked members whether minutes of the previous meeting accurately captured the discussion on rebranding, as she felt opinion was unclear. However, Council was now faced with an effective *fait accompli* by management. Tenders had been called, and a consortium of Keystone Corporate Positioning/ Taylor Nelson Sofres/ Cato Partners had been chosen. The launch of a new brand, if any, and the Foundation would coincide with the opening of the building extension, probably in May, by the Prime Minister. Brent explained that "the Archive knows where it is going and needs help to get there [and] to reach its main constituency... the Minister has asked the Archive to consider changing its name [which is] misleading as to the Archive's role and function, and there is confusion [with] the National Archives of Australia."⁴¹⁴ While evidence for these assertions was not adduced,⁴¹⁵ action was underway. Gary Saunders of Keystone Corporate Positioning was in attendance and explained how the project

⁴¹² The NFSA's Public Affairs Unit recommended that a branding and repositioning project be put out to tender, arguing that previous surveys indicated that the NFSA's name and logo were not readily identifiable.

⁴¹³ Resolution 37/3, meeting of 7 December 1998.

⁴¹⁴ "Mr Brent explained that, in response to the Council's concerns... the Archive had refocused its activity to emphasise market research leading to the development of a marketing strategic plan, but that this research would include research into the name..... many industry people and researchers are still unaware of the Archive and its role and services. He said the Archive's first priority is to increase its profile in these sectors, and that it would also like to increase its profile as an exhibition venue.

"In response to questions..., Mr Cansfield-Smith [head of Public Affairs] stated that the selected consortium had been chosen on the basis of its research proposal and design capabilities, and its ability to fit within the Archive's time-frame and budget constraints. He explained that the proposed work was modular (with market research, corporate positioning and design components) and that these modules could be reshaped or halted if events or findings along the way so indicated. However, Mr Brent stated that it was likely, given practical problems with the current logo design and the Minister's expressed concern with the current name, that at least some design work, and investigation of alternative names will be required." Minutes 26 February 1999

⁴¹⁵ The reported views of the Minister are similar to the views expressed in the long ago Council paper of June 1989 – i.e. the present name was media specific and didn't include radio, television and video, and that it got confused with Australian Archives.

would proceed.⁴¹⁶ The Archive's past research into its brand and positioning would feed into the process.⁴¹⁷

There was Council discussion on national vs. international research, the past experience of the chosen consortium, its relevance to the Archive, and managing the transition from one logo to another.⁴¹⁸ As an advisory body the Council could do no more than disagree if it chose to. In any case, it would have no opportunity to affect the course of events. Council did not adopt any resolution as a result of its discussions on 26 February 1999. When it next met on 21 June 1999, the launch of the new brand was only hours away.

3.4.3 THE RESEARCH PROJECT⁴¹⁹

Narrowed slightly to eight in-depth interviews and six focus groups, the project got underway in March after senior staff provided names of potential participants: over two hundred, from whom the consultants were understood to have made a selection. Major memory institutions and the NFSA's overseas counterparts were excluded.⁴²⁰ The

⁴¹⁶ He explained that the project would look at the Archive's positioning in terms of brand attributes and market awareness of what the Archive does, followed by development of a marketing strategy for achieving the desired position and awareness. Initial research would comprise ten in-depth interviews and six focus groups to follow up issues raised in the interviews. Sectors being researched were industry, education, Canberrans, and general consumers. Council Minutes, 26 Feb 1999

⁴¹⁷ A table setting out the conclusions of various information gathering exercises from 1993 to 1999 summarises this research. It does not cohere around any particular conclusions.

⁴¹⁸ The logo, developed in 1984, featured a realistically drawn kookaburra set against a semicircular background suggesting a sound recording. It was a 'busy' design that could not be easily miniaturised and it reproduced with a moiré effect on a video screen. One obvious option was to simplify or stylize the design.

⁴¹⁹ The project is defined by the NFSA's tender briefing documents of 14 January 1999, Keystone's successful tender proposal, dated January 1999, and an 'agreement for services' contract between NFSA and Keystone dated 1 March 1999. See [Appendix 8](#).

⁴²⁰ On 4 March 1999 I emailed Tim Cansfield-Smith (cc to NFSA Executive group), as follows; "I don't recall if this is in the brief, but our 'professional' setting needs to be tested – within Australia, I'm thinking primarily of the other major institutions within the Distributed National Collection (DNC - the National Library, National Museum et al) and the major State libraries, archives etc. We should also test a selection of our major opposite numbers overseas. We could probably do this with a careful explanatory letter. Our international positioning is important to us and we can't ignore it." Ron Brent quickly responded: "I would be inclined to take a narrower approach. We have limited time and money for our market research and it is aimed at informing us how we market the Archive. While we

interviews and focus groups were conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres, and a report which represented the findings of the project was ready in April.⁴²¹ The main findings were:

- All audience groups see a need to change – the challenge will be to maintain the ‘good’ elements of the current positioning, move in the optimum direction, and provide an effective platform for increasing recognition, status, appeal and effectiveness.
- A key issue is whether to adopt the positioning of a Museum or Collection or to maintain its focus on being an ‘archive’ in its most rigid sense.⁴²²
- The challenge facing this research project has been to find a way of bridging the gap between the collection, its current users and its future development.
- To effectively move the Archive towards its new positioning, a positioning line reflecting enhanced status and a more accessible definition of its activities is needed
- This should be coupled with a memorable and unique marketing name that draws the perception forward towards the ideal positioning
- An integrated communication strategy will be critical to successfully moving forward while reinforcing key attributes and reassuring key clients.

These findings were represented as the basis for subsequent decisions.

The process was opaque. The consultants did not identify the participants in the focus groups or interviews. While it is assumed that the sessions were recorded, transcribed or directly summarised (how else could a reliable report be written?) no raw data ever

have an international role, and while we need to position ourselves in the professional sphere in which we operate (eg the DNC, and other national institutions) these should not determine our marketing strategy”.

⁴²¹ “Brand National Film and Sound Archive, incorporating ‘brand’ NFSA customer image” prepared by Taylor Nelson Sofres. Although dated March 1999 it could not possibly have been written before April if it genuinely reflected the outcome of all the interviews and focus groups.

⁴²² Terms were defined as follows: “A museum or collection is where a set of cultural objects and/or high art are collected, preserved, defined and arrayed by experts in various environments (such as great art, plays, books, music and now film, sound and television). These are seen as accessible to experts and the community alike. An archive is generally seen as a rather ‘flat and depthless’ specialist grouping which while authentic, is inaccessible”.

came to the NFSA, despite requests.⁴²³ I observed one group⁴²⁴ and later received feedback confirming the doubtful value of the focus group approach.⁴²⁵

On 9 March the Director circulated a staff “Branding Brief”, which began by saying that it was “the first of a series of briefings... on a major project we have undertaken to examine, and possibly change, the Archive’s branding – that is, its name and/or logo and general presentation.” The head of the Public Affairs Unit invited staff to begin proposing possible new names for the Archive. There was a good response, with names ranging from the thoughtful, including many variations on the current brand, to the comical. Some took the issue more seriously than others, but the suggestions were being devised in a vacuum, without context or consideration of practical implementation.⁴²⁶

⁴²³ On 2 November 1999, after repeated informal requests, Acting Director David Toll wrote to Taylor Nelson Sofres seeking to know more of the context in which their research was carried out. He asked for information in relation to the size and representation of the focus groups in each of the cities, how the composition was determined, and how they felt the groups represented the NFSA’s current users and non-users. He also expressed interest in the types of questions and scenarios put to the individual interviewees and groups, and how the NFSA was represented to the participants. Was there a range of questions or other documentation that would provide a better understanding of the activities of the focus groups? “I have no knowledge of the range of responses you received, including the depth of feeling on the issues raised. I understand each of the sessions was taped, and I believe a viewing of these tapes would help considerably in my understanding of the processes you followed and your analysis. What we need to have is the benefit of the detailed comments from all those who participated, since it is clear from having observed the Canberra focus groups in operation that much useful and pertinent information about specific activities and services was forthcoming. This information is needed to help us modify our services in response to client needs.” To the best of my knowledge, the letter was never answered and no tapes or other information were ever supplied.

⁴²⁴ At the consultants’ invitation, on 25 March 1999 I observed one of the Canberra focus groups through a two way mirror. I immediately felt like a voyeur spying on people, some of whom I knew personally as colleagues and users of the NFSA. It was an uncomfortable experience. I did note down some of the useful practical feedback coming out of the discussion, none of which was reported by the consultants. At one point the idea of a name change for the NFSA was obliquely referred to by the facilitator but it gained no traction with the group.

⁴²⁵ Staff member Marilyn Dooley documented feedback she had received from participants in one of the Canberra focus groups, which was based on her Academic Outreach contact list (this was probably the group I *didn’t* observe). “They were unimpressed at being given an envelope of \$40 cash and they asked if it was coming out of my Academic Outreach budget because they were willing to give it back. They thought the consultant’s communication skills were poor – talking down to them when the room was full of PhDs. They didn’t like the slanted commercialism of the consultants, who didn’t seem to understand the academics’ devotion to the collection as a resource. I have never seen the questions put to the group and I was not told anything as follow up. Most of my electorate hate the new name – they think it’s too commercial and moves away from our brief as a national heritage collection – they were also startled about the Fox studio move – seeing it as having the potential of compromising the collection.” Email, 1 December 1999.

⁴²⁶ So far as I can establish, no background information or intellectual context on the pros and cons of rebranding were offered, and there was no analysis of the practical implications of a name change. It was not the best time for thoughtful pondering. With the new building extension being fitted out, staff were intensely preoccupied with practical accommodation issues and the task of relocating.

Day-to-day contact with the consultants was handled by the head of the Public Affairs Unit, but overall liaison was managed by an ad hoc steering committee, chaired by the Director, which included some members of the NFSA Executive. Although I was Deputy Director, I had not been involved in the selection of the consultants, nor was I part of this committee at the beginning. Keystone was usually represented by its principal, Donna Meredith. Meetings were irregular, often rescheduled at short notice for Keystone's convenience. The Executive members had no experience with rebranding or repositioning and were encouraged to rely on Keystone.⁴²⁷ The Minister was briefed by Brent and Meredith, and forewarned that any change of name and logo would need to be made quickly.⁴²⁸ Even Telstra got involved.⁴²⁹

SOME SAMPLE NAMES OFFERED BY STAFF

Australian Sound and Moving Image Archive (ASMIA)

Australian Screen and Sound Archive (ASSA)

The Archive Down Under

Filmsound Australia

The Coca-Cola Ultimate Film and Sound Getaway

The Australian Institute for Screen and Sound Heritage

Australian National Screen and Sound Archive (ANSSA)

The Archive formerly known as the National Film and Sound Archive

McArchive

We Should Never Have Changed our Name Archive

NFSA Blue

⁴²⁷ Among NFSA staff, the consultants' manner earned them the sobriquet "The Keystone Kops". In film history, the Kops were a group of comically inept policemen featured in the famous silent comedies of Keystone Studios in the 1910s.

⁴²⁸ "There is general consensus within the organisation and with external stakeholders that the name is difficult and misleading in terms of what we do and what people perceive we do, and that the logo, without a verbal or written context, does not engender awareness, interest or a positive response. In addition, since Australian Archives changed its name to the National Archives of Australia, there has been increasing confusion between that organisation and the National Film and Sound Archive." Briefing note to the Minister from Ron Brent, 17 March 1999

⁴²⁹ A curious incident which seemed to confirm the existence of confusion between NFSA and NAA happened during March, when Telstra cut off the NFSA's phones by mistake. At the time NAA was moving into its new headquarters building and Telstra confused the two bodies. The incident was seized on as confirmation of the claim.

In early April, discussion focussed on the choice of the new name. Keystone's lawyers advised immediate registration of two 'positioning' lines: *The National Collection of Film, Sound and Television* and *The National Collection of Modern Media*. With reference to names, they advised:

Only *Masterworks* and *Playback* are completely clear at this stage, with *Kaleidoscope* likely to be clear also. *Playback* is not on our "short, short list" of *Kaleidoscope*, *ScreenSound*, *Applause* and *Masterworks* and does not meet our positioning needs. *ScreenSound* is in conflict with the mark "Screen Australia" registered by Cinemedia....we recommend that only *Kaleidoscope* and *Masterworks* are briefed for design development, although our overwhelming preference is for *Kaleidoscope* because of its memorable nature (both visual and auditory), fit to the desired positioning and great opportunities for design and communications.

Despite reservations within the steering committee, logo design work on both was commissioned.

On 11 May 1999, Keystone presented its findings to the NFSA Executive and senior Public Affairs staff. They proposed a two-tier naming strategy – a weighty formal name to convey national status, and a popular marketing brand - recommending *The National Collection of Screen and Sound* as the formal name and *Masterworks*, *Kaleidoscope* or *ScreenSound Australia* as the popular brand. Two logos were presented; the *Masterworks* logo⁴³⁰ was adaptable for *ScreenSound Australia*. The Executive then met separately and concluded:

ScreenSound Australia was the best choice for the popular name/brand...while not being particularly 'zingy' [it] represented a measured but appropriate forward step for the Archive.....the formal name of *The National Collection of Screen and Sound* was acceptable though most would have preferred a 'better' word than 'collection'. However, it was generally agreed that the word 'archive', while reflecting more specifically the work of the NFSA, had connotations which proved negative and was causing increasing confusion because of the Australian Archives' change to National Archives of Australia. Other possible words – centre, institute etc – were considered and rejected for various reasons.

Ray Edmondson noted his reservations about dropping the word 'archive' from the name. Ron Brent concurred with the decision of the Executive, stating that

430

A curl of film shaped like a gramophone horn, surmounting an oblong shape suggesting a record disc.

while the proposed shift is relatively conservative it would enable the Archive to move forward.⁴³¹

The Minister was advised accordingly. In his brief submission, Ron Brent noted that:

The proposed new name is

- inclusive, national and unique
- easy to say and to remember
- reflects to the world that the collection is comprised of film, radio and television, video and all aspects of sound recordings

*The professional nature of the organisation as an audiovisual archive will not change,*⁴³² and as such, the rebranding is conservative, taking with it the best of the existing aspects of recognition of the NFSA through its central function of the collection, and adding a layer of smart recognition.⁴³³ Nevertheless the new positioning will support the increased public focus of our strategic plans for expanded access services (to complement the existing services to professional industry clients).⁴³⁴

The document had been endorsed by the Departmental Secretary, Neville Stevens, with the comment “I think the logo and name are excellent” and the Minister duly approved the proposal. In effect he approved a *departure* from a departmental norm: all the other

⁴³¹ Minutes of special meeting of Executive, 11 May 1999. They also record that “Ron Brent and Ray Edmondson opted to remain silent for the bulk of the discussion, Ray having sent his ideas in an email....to enable the rest of the Executive to discuss the issues”. Not recorded was my proposal to the meeting that Brent and I should leave the room to allow others to freely discuss the issues. Brent countered that we should both stay in the meeting but remain silent. I felt everyone thereby knew what was expected of them! Minutes of this historic meeting were prepared only at my subsequent insistence. Further, the minutes are interesting in another sense. They are written with frequent use of the acronym ‘NFSA’ and the term ‘the Archive’. Once these terms were removed, writing up minutes and policies would become more confusing because it was not workable to refer to the institution as ‘the Collection’.

⁴³² The italicised words were added at the last minute at my request, when I saw the final draft just before it was despatched to the Minister, via the Departmental Secretary.

⁴³³ I do not recall that anyone understood what the term “smart recognition” meant.

⁴³⁴ Submission from Ron Brent to the Minister, 12 May 1999. It reiterated the earlier claim that the NFSA’s name got confused with NAA, and added “market research has shown that the NFSA is the least recognised national collecting organisation.” It went on to say that “the process has involved detailed, qualitative market research of existing and potential customers of the Archive, development of a new strategic plan for the Archive, and the associated development of a strategic marketing plan, of which a new name and logo for the Archive are key components.... The extended descriptive form of the name, *The National Collection of Screen and Sound*, will be used both nationally and internationally (with ‘Australia’ being added in the international context). It can be used either on its own or to clarify the status and role of *ScreenSound Australia* as required.....Where it is essential to reach the audience quickly, only the short form of the name will be used.

collecting institutions in the portfolio had moved *towards* a standard formula for their names.⁴³⁵

On the same day (12 May) three Sydney-based members of the NFSA Advisory Council met and were advised of the rebranding endorsed by the Minister. The remaining Council members were advised by couriered letters⁴³⁶ in which Brent noted that:

In all corporate and promotional applications, the marketing brand 'ScreenSound Australia' would be pre-eminent, with the official name, 'The National Collection of Screen and Sound' used as a design element, or sign-off. In official government correspondence and conversation the official name will be given prominence.

A briefing document dated 17 May was appended which set out Keystone's key research conclusions and recommendations, their rationale for the new name, goals and objectives for the marketing strategy, and details of the June 21 launch, which would include a video presentation *The Archive on Show*. Crucially, the new branding was to remain confidential⁴³⁷ until the 21 June evening launch. There was little more than a month to prepare for a spectacular evening event, devise a complex video presentation, despatch invitations, prepare collateral⁴³⁸, develop a new website, and put the final touches to the building extension.⁴³⁹ The formal invitation to the event foreshadowed a

⁴³⁵ For example, National Library of Australia, National Museum of Australia (previously Museum of Australia), National Gallery of Australia (previously Australian National Gallery), National Archives of Australia (previously Australian Archives). The name National Film and Sound Archive [of Australia] had conformed to this formula since its creation.

⁴³⁶ Dated 20 May, signed by the Director, and which they were required to read and return.

⁴³⁷ To the Council, the NFSA Executive, the Minister and Secretary (and presumably their immediate staffs) and Keystone. A meeting of staff members was advised of the change just hours before the formal function began. They were sworn to secrecy until the formal announcement.

⁴³⁸ That is, letterheads and other stationery, business cards, brochures and flyers and so on, all of which would have to conform to a new style guide and new corporate colours. Grey and blue would replace the existing maroon and black, and feature the new logo and name.

⁴³⁹ The existing NFSA kookaburra logo was applied as a decoration to light fittings in the new extension. During the course of the launch function on the evening of 21 June, these decorations and other evidences of the old brand were quietly expunged, although the words "National Film and Sound Archive", set in metal letters high over the main entrance, could not be so easily removed.

“new direction”⁴⁴⁰ while a media release from the Minister’s on the day was more forthcoming.⁴⁴¹

FOX STUDIOS

Concurrently the NFSA was deciding to relocate its Sydney office, which operated from a shopfront in Crows Nest. It had been invited into the new Fox Studios complex at the Moore Park Showground, being reconfigured by Twentieth Century-Fox as a production, business and entertainment complex. Although there would be tradeoffs,⁴⁴² it seemed a logical move for its synergies with industry and user contact, and appealed as a prestigious advance consistent with the NFSA’s new “positioning”. In its report dated March 1999, Taylor Nelson Sofres declared the move to Fox was “unanimously, universally and enthusiastically supported” by participants in the research study⁴⁴³. An arrangement with Fox was negotiated.⁴⁴⁴ The physical move proceeded in October.

⁴⁴⁰ The invitation read: “The Hon Peter McGauran MP, Federal Minister for the Arts, and Ms Susan Oliver, Chair of the Council of the National Film and Sound Archive, request the pleasure of your company at a launch to announce an important new direction for Australia’s Screen and Sound Heritage, and the opening of the new Technical Wing of the National Film and Sound Archive by the Hon John Howard MP, Prime Minister.”

⁴⁴¹ “Australia’s National Film and Sound Archive will come of age tonight with the launch of a new identity and opening of its new multi-million dollar facilities by the Prime Minister, John Howard. Tonight’s launch marks the beginning of an exciting era for the Archive, which is already one of our most unique, entertaining and accessible institutions [said McGauran]...the new name, revealed tonight, is just the start. The Federal Government has funded \$18 million worth of redevelopment and upgrades and plans are underway to increase the Archive’s profile and capabilities...the Archive is the most accessible screen and sound archive in the world...the new identity will reflect this openness and accessibility...the launch will be a memorable celebration of the Archive’s work over the years....” Media release by Peter McGauran MP, ‘Multi-million dollar launch by Prime Minister’ 21 June 1999

⁴⁴² On balance, the end cost to the NFSA would be higher, and some “Sydney filmmakers and other customers of the Archive would be disappointed to see us align ourselves so closely with some of the major players (although I do not anticipate any of these would be sufficiently disappointed to in any way inhibit our ongoing effective relationships with them)”. (Ron Brent memo to the Council Chair and the Sydney Office, 18 June 1999).

⁴⁴³ It added that the move was “a good way of making the Archive accessible yet maintaining its link with the film and sound industry; could even include an Archive cinema in the complex; an excellent to promote [sic] the existence of the Archive and its Canberra exhibition; a great way to provide a space to exhibit and sell Archive products and services to the broader community.” However, it did caution that “there was some concern about co-branding – needs to be managed to ensure the status of the Archive is maintained”.

⁴⁴⁴ Sydney office staff discussed the prospects with Keystone’s Donna Meredith and formed the view that Keystone were in a better position than the NFSA to broker a hard-nosed leasing deal with Fox. The broader implications could have been that Keystone was cultivating these staff members for its own advantage, and I alerted Brent. See emails within NFSA Executive 10 May 1999.



Fig 3: NFSA and ScreenSound logos (Source: NFSA)

3.4.4 LAUNCH OF SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA

Around 6 pm on 21 June 1999, some 500 invited guests assembled in the NFSA's south gallery for a lavish reception to mark the opening of the building extension by the Prime Minister, and to learn of the "important new direction" referred to in their invitations. After the speeches a ten minute video presentation of clips from the collection was run. It concluded with the revelation of NFSA's new brand: *ScreenSound Australia/ The National Collection of Screen and Sound*. There was polite applause, and singing star Marcia Hines then entertained the crowd. Tours of the new premises followed, and as guests left around 9 pm they were given a souvenir package which included a letter from the Director thanking them for joining in celebrating the launch of ScreenSound Australia, as well as a media kit comprising a press release, backgrounder on the Archive's work, and quotable quotes from prominent personalities about the importance of preserving the heritage (although none endorsed the new brand). But there was no statement explaining *why* the name had been changed, beyond the assertion that it was a "natural step."⁴⁴⁵

‘Celebrating’ the launch of the new brand was hardly an accurate way to describe the guests’ reaction. It was clear that many, perhaps most, did not comprehend what had just happened. One guest pointed out to me that “screen sound”⁴⁴⁶ was a technical term in the film industry. Why had it had now been applied to the NFSA? An occasion that should have marked the achievement of the NFSA’s foundational dream of an extended building, and celebrated its now well-established identity, did neither. Inexplicably, the NFSA identity had been summarily deleted as if the institution was starting over.

There was nothing in the new identity to reflect continuity with the past, nor to transfer NFSA brand equity. The logo and corporate colours were different, and stationery design suggested that ScreenSound Australia was an entirely new organisation. Embargoed media kits had been delivered during the day to all members of Parliament under a covering letter from Ron Brent (“Dear member, I am pleased to introduce our new identity – ScreenSound Australia, the National Collection of Screen and Sound”) which made no mention of the NFSA at all. And history would be rewritten when the NFSA’s *Annual Review* for 1998-99 was tabled in Parliament. The entire year’s work was documented as if the new brand had been operating for the whole reporting year, when in fact it had been there only for the last ten days. The high water mark had been reached. Once a surprised constituency realised what had happened, reactions would begin.

⁴⁴⁵ Some extracts from the media kit give the flavour:

“We are now positioned for the future. Part of that move forward will be a focus on strategic alliances with industry and business. A ScreenSound Foundation will be established later this year to foster involvement of people and businesses from all sectors of the community to support the valuable work we do....Set to open in October 1999, [a] Treasures exhibition will include unique items from ScreenSound Australia’s National Collection, stretching back to the first film made in Australia – the 1896 Melbourne Cup...[there will be] artefacts, awards, memorabilia, equipment and audiovisual presentations, symbolizing Australia’s amazing achievements in screen and sound....

“Tonight was really only the start. We have many months of development and planning ahead to make our new name count. We will be an organisation that truly reflects our new positioning....

“[This] is the first step in a long-term effort to increase recognition of [our] work, and more importantly, take [the institution] successfully into the 21st century. With the launch of our new identity, the aim is to now build on our leading status in the field of preservation and be even more relevant and accessible to Australians in the future. A new identity and positioning is a natural step from where we started many years ago as a small part of the National Library of Australia.... Our new identity not only reflects the past, but the present – a new identity and a move forward to also save and collect the present generation of screen and sound heritage for the future.”

⁴⁴⁶ It means projecting a film’s optical sound track onto the screen as well as the image – sometimes done for laboratory checking purposes.

3.4.5 REACTIONS TO THE REBRANDING

The Sunday following the launch, 27 June, was a public open day, and Macca's (Ian McNamara) national radio program, *Australia all over*, was broadcast live from NFSA. In an extended interview with Ron Brent, Macca could not quite get used to the new name and the conversation became confused as Ron Brent explained "we're still an archive". It was an explanation that would be often repeated because it was no longer obvious from the new brand *what* the institution was.

Within NFSA and DCITA the word 'archive' became politically incorrect, virtually overnight.⁴⁴⁷ Puzzled staff began asking both me and the Public Affairs Unit how to refer to the institution in written or oral form – as SSA, SS, ScreenSound, the Archive, the Organisation? Donna Meredith's advice was unequivocal:

After first introduction as "ScreenSound Australia", I would suggest that "ScreenSound" or 'the organisation' (depending on context) are acceptable, but that no other variation should be supported. Definitely no acronyms!⁴⁴⁸

The offending term was banished from Council records – it does not once appear in the minutes of the 27 August 1999 meeting. A staff member asked me "are we still an archive?" The nature of ScreenSound Australia, even with the formal title appended, was no longer self evident. Officially its nature as an audiovisual archive had not changed, but its name no longer proclaimed its nature, role or mission.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ Around this time I had a rather strange conversation with an Assistant Secretary from DCITA who eyed me disapprovingly whenever I used the forbidden word, and who scrupulously said 'ScreenSound' herself.

⁴⁴⁸ Email from Donna Meredith to Tim Cansfield-Smith, 5 July 1999

⁴⁴⁹ As a means of enforcing the new brand, after the first several months the email address "@nfsa.gov.au" was blocked and no longer diverted messages to "@screensound.gov.au". This probably cost the NFSA contacts and messages it would otherwise have received.

It was soon apparent that the two-tiered branding strategy, fundamental to the expressed logic of the change, was not working. The official title of the institution, *The National Collection of Screen and Sound*, which appeared in small print as a 'strapline' under the *ScreenSound Australia* brand, was not being perceived as an institutional title but as simply an explanatory phrase taken literally. It was easier to default to the marketing brand, *ScreenSound Australia*, on its own. However, as the tide of complaints began to rise, the term 'archive', which had long been cemented in constituency usage, refused to go away.

The visiting public did not easily adapt to the new name. Soon after the launch, front-line staff began to document and internally circulate, to some hilarity, the various versions of the name which visitors and telephone callers used.⁴⁵⁰ Since there was no official explanation for the change to guide staff dealing with clients, they were left on their own to defend it to puzzled and sometimes angry visitors and callers, who also left their own comments in the visitors' book.⁴⁵¹ Although some liked the sound of the new title, most did not. Nor did the change find many supporters in the media. First out of the blocks was the City Desk column in the weekly Canberra local paper, *The Chronicle*:

The National Film and Sound Archive has succumbed to modern trends and adopted a new name. It's now ScreenSound Australia. Call us old-fashioned, but we can't get excited about the way-hip fad of crushing names together and sandwiching a capital somewhere in the middle. And we would prefer our national institutions retain their simple but dignified titles⁴⁵²

This item prompted a reader to ask, the following week: "does this mean the organisation will now be known as the SS?" More, much more, would follow in the ensuing months, prompting a commentator to say, one year on:

⁴⁵⁰ Examples: Sunscreen Australia, Smokescreen Australia, Filmscreen, Filmsound, Creamsound, Screen Saver Australia, Sound Screen Australia, Scream Found Australia. There were instances of callers hanging up after receiving the greeting "Good morning, ScreenSound Australia" in the belief that they had dialled the wrong number.

⁴⁵¹ At the time, Bruce Leonard was producing a syndicated radio program under contract to the NFSA. It featured selections from vintage radio programs. In the absence of any guidance, he had to make up his own story to explain the name change. Listeners were told that it signified a move from the 'searching' phase of the NFSA's growth, while it was building and preserving its collection, to an 'access' phase where the collection was going to be more available.

⁴⁵² *The Chronicle*, 3 August 1999

...the reaction from the industry could best be summed up as outrage... [a] bland name which didn't give the vaguest hint of the Archive's core activity, not to mention the fact that the new name hid its public service role.⁴⁵³

For months, even years, afterwards comments flooded in from visitors and clients, by email, letter and verbally. A few people liked the change, but the vast majority did not. A small sample conveys the flavour: the most common themes were that the name was meaningless, it sounded commercial, and the loss of the terms 'national' and 'archive' deprived the NFSA of its status and character.⁴⁵⁴

It took time for broader stakeholder opinion to crystallise, probably because the change was so unexpected. When it came, feelings ran strongest in the film, television and academic communities and the professional associations, where there were mechanisms for the expression of opinion.⁴⁵⁵ The claim of confusion between NFSA and NAA was quickly discounted: "no one [in the film industry] has heard of NAA outside Canberra".⁴⁵⁶ From late September 1999 onwards, letters begin to flow to the Director, the Council, the Minister and others. The *Annual Review 1999-2000* noted that:

...out of a total of 99 complaints received, ScreenSound Australia's change of name and the relocation of its Sydney office provoked a total of 73... Staff have

⁴⁵³ Peter Galvin, "Screensound Finds a Few Friends," *IF magazine* July 2000. p11

⁴⁵⁴ Examples selected from emails and other documents received during 1999:

- Slick and inappropriate; it will date quickly
- It sounds like a production company/ electronics shop/ computer company/ film studio/ company that does double glazing/ funding agency
- No such thing as a collection of screens
- National Collection of Screen and Sound sounds like a collection of stuff in a place. Doesn't suggest an institution or any service
- It trivializes the archive. There is a sense in which it redefines the archive and its function and priorities....this attempt to be more 'commercial' will be insignificant financially and will actually undermine long term community and political support.

⁴⁵⁵ The corollary is that the community at large do not have such mechanisms, and unless they visit it as tourists, donate to it, purchase its products, or take in a television or radio program in which a credit for the Archive strongly registers, the name of the Archive, or indeed any other memory institution, will not have any personal resonance.

⁴⁵⁶ Discussion with film producer and former NFSA Council member Anthony Buckley, 15 July 1999

worked very hard to communicate the rationale for these two changes and complaints have steadily decreased.⁴⁵⁷

Staff would certainly have been worked very hard, because the rationale for the name change was neither clear nor formally communicated to them. The rationale does not appear in the *Annual Review*, either.

Opposition to both the name change and the move of the Sydney office to Fox became closely connected issues. The name change was perceived as totally inappropriate, and the move to Fox suggested the NFSA had sold out to foreign interests colonising the national heritage. Gary Maddox of the *Sydney Morning Herald* canvassed NFSA users and supporters who described the move as “dangerous and misguided” and questioned whether the name change “reflected a change in direction of the archive towards leisure and entertainment and away from its former core function of preserving our national film and sound heritage”. The NFSA was at risk of losing the support of independent producers if it did not re-establish its identity.⁴⁵⁸

Following publication of Maddox’s article, adverse comment at the annual conference of the Screen Producers’ Association of Australia (SPAA) was sufficiently worrying to prompt the insertion of a quickly prepared statement from Ron Brent⁴⁵⁹ in the daily conference news bulletin:

“....Concerns have been expressed that these two events [name change and move to Fox] signal that we have lost our way. It has been put to me that ScreenSound may be forgetting its core business and that the accommodation move is an indication that we have entered into some corporate agreement that gives Fox control over the National Collection of Screen and Sound. ...

⁴⁵⁷ ScreenSound Australia *Annual Review* 1999-2000, p 14

⁴⁵⁸ Gary Maddox, "Anger and Angst as Film Archive Moves to Fox," *Sydney Morning Herald* 12 Nov 1999. The article was followed up by an interview with John Maynard on ABC radio's AM program the next morning, and Maddox did a further piece in the SMH on 11 November in which film producer John Weiley called the move to Fox “nauseating”.

⁴⁵⁹ Brent had returned from long service leave on 8 November

The name change was designed to alleviate problems associated with the old name. Many of our functions, like the preservation of Australian television, were simply unacknowledged in the old name. We were also continually confused with other archives, especially the National Archives of Australia. As our database went on line to the world, we believed that there was a need for “Australia” in the title. We were also looking for a name that would appeal more to young people.⁴⁶⁰ The name change was designed to make us *more* accessible. It did not in any way signify a change of direction or corporatization.

The accommodation move of our Sydney office has the simple aim of locating ourselves geographically where we can best serve our expanding and evolving Sydney clientele...I am very concerned by the unease these two changes have caused. I will be making every effort to talk to our clients.....”⁴⁶¹

3.4.6 EMERGING PROBLEMS

After June 1999, sales of videos, CDs and other NFSA products, which had risen steadily year by year, plunged by forty two percent. The product line had to re-establish itself with the new identity. Existing stock was rebranded by adding stickers to each unit. While the *Annual Review* for 1998-99 had reported a twenty four percent increase in sales, and a 155% increase in sales over the four years until then, sales figures were not mentioned in the 1999-2000 *Review*, following the rebranding. The growth trajectory resumed from a lower base, but the leeway was never made up.⁴⁶²

One of the stated reasons for the rebranding was to avoid confusion with another organisation. But by October 1999 it was clear the *ScreenSound* brand was not unique. It was a technical term for a film or television sound track. It was the identity of a

⁴⁶⁰ The first time “appeal to young people” was publicly mentioned as a reason for the rebranding.

⁴⁶¹ SPAA daily news 12 November 1999. Tony Buckley reported to me on 16 November that the NFSA’s representative at SPAA had been surrounded by people berating the name change (diary note).

⁴⁶² Actual figures: \$459,770 (1997/98), \$ 572,228 (1998/99), \$337,009 (1999/2000). The drop may have been affected by saturation of NFSA product in a niche market, as well as the rebranding. Repackaging of the products was time consuming and caused distribution delays. When the comparative financial year sales figures were presented to the Council meeting of 6 October 2000, the decline was attributed to the introduction of the GST. It would not have been politic to attribute it to the rebranding.

specialised profession.⁴⁶³ The Solid State Logic 'ScreenSound' was a sophisticated, internationally marketed sound mixing console. Screensound Pty Ltd was a Sydney-based professional sound recording studio whose identity was becoming confused with ScreenSound Australia (see below).

While Ron Brent was on long service leave⁴⁶⁴ the Acting Director, David Toll, became alarmed by irregularities in the management of Keystone's contract and warned the Departmental Secretary and the Minister. An emergency audit by KPMG was instigated and a draft report completed by November.⁴⁶⁵ The Council had lost confidence that Keystone could develop either a plan for the still unlaunched ScreenSound Foundation⁴⁶⁶ or a workable marketing plan for the institution.⁴⁶⁷ The KPMG audit now revealed that the entire contractual arrangement had been seriously mismanaged.⁴⁶⁸ The head of the NFSA Public Affairs Unit, Tim Cansfield-Smith, announced his departure.⁴⁶⁹ Such was the situation when Ron Brent returned from long service leave.

⁴⁶³ Represented by the Australian Screen Sound Guild (www.assg.org.au)

⁴⁶⁴ From 30 August until 5 November 1999

⁴⁶⁵ The final report was completed in February 2000.

⁴⁶⁶ Minutes of Council meeting 27 August 1999, items 4 and 5

⁴⁶⁷ Its inability to do so was finally accepted by Council in December (Minutes of meeting 1 December 1999, items 7 and 8)

⁴⁶⁸ An expurgated copy of the KPMG report was obtained under FOI. I read the full report at the time in my capacity as NFSA Deputy Director. The shortcomings included large and unauthorised cost overruns, lack of documentation, missing files, poor oversight and defining of deliverables, and general lack of adherence to due process. Even the actual contract with Keystone was never signed. The process of terminating the relationship was to prove protracted.

⁴⁶⁹ In an email to all staff dated 5 October, Cansfield-Smith advised: "... Today was my last day..... I hope that I have contributed to positive change at ScreenSound (well, there's one example, I think!) during my 2 years as Public Affairs Manager....As it turns out, I don't think I'll be able to find what I need nor contribute as much as I want to contribute professionally here at ScreenSound, so I've decided that now's the time to move on and create a bigger and better future. Some of you know I haven't been completely well during the last year, having suffered a bout of depression which kept me in and out of the workplace somewhat unpredictably. While this workplace was somewhat of a trigger for my illness, the 'system' and especially the people here also provided immeasurable help to me, both professionally and personally....."

DAMAGE CONTROL

Brent tried to mend bridges with vocal members of the NFSA's Sydney constituency, and met with Board members of the Australian Screen Directors' Association (ASDA).⁴⁷⁰ He acknowledged the term 'archive' should have been kept. He agreed (a) that NFSA would be reinstated as the Archive's principal name, retaining the ScreenSound logo pending its review as a sub-brand, and that (b) everyone should refer to the Archive as NFSA now. The changes would be attended to by February. But in the final version of the minutes, these undertakings were hedged with caveats (for example, 'subject to Council's and Minister's agreement'), and while it could later be claimed, at a stretch, that they were technically honoured, they were not honoured in spirit. The exchanges of letters and file notes in late 1999 reveal the depth of anger, mistrust and disillusionment. There were threats to withdraw collection material and cease supporting the institution in any way.

The NFSA now had a major self-inflicted dilemma. Far from "taking it successfully into the 21st century"⁴⁷¹, the rebranding had actually undermined the institution's credibility, identity and support base. It had embarrassed the Minister, the Advisory Council and the Department. It had laid on confused staff a problem which was sucking oxygen from day-to-day work. The consultants had not delivered all that was expected, and the maladministration was a potential media scandal.⁴⁷² Damage control would dominate the coming year. NFSA would have to appease the constituency, fulfil a promise to reinstate the original name, and attend to criticism of the Fox move. But it had to avoid making the Minister, the Department and the Council look foolish, so it kept asserting the new brand. The Council Chair forbade further discussion of the issue.⁴⁷³ These were incompatible aims. There was the continuing relationship with

⁴⁷⁰ Held on 6 December 1999. As minute taker, I made as full a record of the discussion as I could.

⁴⁷¹ Press release 21 June 1999

⁴⁷² The KPMG audit report was not a public document, and the media never sniffed out the story.

⁴⁷³ As advised in private note from a Council member who was present.

Keystone, and the other promises made at the June launch, such as establishing a foundation.

3.4.7 RESTORING “ARCHIVE” AND MANAGING MULTIPLE BRANDS

To retrieve lost equity⁴⁷⁴, Council authorised introduction of the phrase *National Film and Sound Archive*⁴⁷⁵, but determined that *ScreenSound Australia* remain the marketing name, and “efforts be directed towards marketing [it] and on how it could be sold in terms of ‘themes’ for the organisation”.⁴⁷⁶ The old name reappeared, in a vertical stripe on brochures and a revived 8 page quarterly newsletter, which now had the masthead *news from the archive*.⁴⁷⁷ The issue for Summer 1999/00 carried a full page editorial explaining the name change, while still using the institutional title *The National Collection of Screen and Sound*:

The name change was designed to alleviate problems associated with the old name. Many of our functions, like the preservation of Australian television, were simply unacknowledged in the old name. We were also continually confused with other archives, especially the National Archives of Australia. As our collections database went on line to the world, we believed that there was a need for ‘Australia’ in the title. We were also looking for a name that would appeal more to young people as we moved into the 21st century. I would like to stress that the name change was designed to make us *more* accessible to wider audiences. It did not in any way signify a change of direction or a corporatisation.

⁴⁷⁴ The name *National Film and Sound Archive* had decorated the canopy over the main entrance of the NFSA building since 1984, when the NFSA displaced the previous owner, the *Australian Institute of Anatomy* and mostly recycled the original letters to maintain the heritage character of the building. On 3 December 1999, an alert staff member sounded the alarm that the removal of the letters by a work team was about to begin. The *ScreenSound Australia* name was presumably intended to occupy this space. The removal was cancelled. The letters are still in situ today, although from about 2001 to 2004 the word “film” was replaced by “screen”.

⁴⁷⁵ As “an explanatory phrase or title, as needed, to complement *ScreenSound Australia*, subject to further informal discussion with stakeholders”

⁴⁷⁶ Council minutes, 1 December 1999, Resolution 41/2

⁴⁷⁷ The newsletter had been in recess since the issue dated Summer 1998/99

Anyone comparing this issue with the previous one, twelve months earlier, might wonder what had happened to make the institution address these hitherto unmentioned problems in such a dramatic way, and why the newsletter was now so much smaller. Wasn't the word 'Australia' already part of the NFSA's original kookaburra logo? But the tone was upbeat: constituency dissent or debate found no mention here.

To mend fences with ASDA and other stakeholders the NFSA conducted a mail survey during February 2000, seeking feedback on the name and Sydney office location. The results were clear, and they were never published.⁴⁷⁸ The Executive group debated replacing *National Collection of Screen and Sound* with *National Film and Sound Archive* or *National Screen and Sound Archive* as the formal institutional title to reach a recommendation for Council.

NFSA CONSTITUENCY SURVEY on name preference	Total
National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA)	42
National Screen and Sound Archive (NSSA)	38
Australian National Screen and Sound Archive (ANSSA)	23
Australian Screen and Sound Archive (ASSA)	4
ScreenSound Australia	2
Other	2
Written comments pro ScreenSound	2
Written comments anti ScreenSound	9
Other written comments – positive	4
Other written comments - negative	13

⁴⁷⁸ 101 survey forms were returned, representing a probable majority of forms sent out to a specialised constituency (the total number distributed was not recorded). Some people indicated more than one choice. Respondents included celebrity names who added comments calling for reinstatement of the NFSA brand. 24 respondents saw disadvantage in the Fox location; 77 indicated either no concerns about the location, OK or not applicable.

3.4.8 FRIENDS OF THE NFSA (FNFSA)

During November 1999, a letter writing campaign was initiated within the film industry by Canberra-based distributor, Ronin Films, in protest at the NFSA's name change and the relocation of its Sydney office to Fox Studios. The circulated text, addressed to the Director, ScreenSound Australia, said:

Both of these developments, we believe, have damaged the identity of the Archive and are creating problems in the public perceptions of the Archive's independence and the true nature of its role in the film and sound community. We are interested in pursuing....the formation of a "Friends of the Archive" association [Such a body] set up with the purpose of cultivating a positive relationship between the Archive and the film community, could help significantly to diminish the problems that currently exist for the Archive.

The group would be led by senior industry figures. Council welcomed the proposal, interpreting this new development as removing their obligation to establish the promised ScreenSound Foundation⁴⁷⁹ on which action could now be "deferred". The group⁴⁸⁰ would soon establish itself as the deliberately named *Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc.* and, inter alia, would campaign to reinstate the NFSA's name.

The FNFSA made a constituency survey of its own,⁴⁸¹ sending the results to Council on 17 March 2000, along with a discussion paper setting out its vision for the NFSA. The Council's reaction is not recorded, though it later approved start-up funding for the Friends,⁴⁸² and in the Autumn 2000 *news from the archive* Ron Brent welcomed its

⁴⁷⁹ Council minutes 1 December 1999, Resolution 41/3

⁴⁸⁰ A note for file by Ron Brent (12 January 2000) documenting a meeting with Tony Buckley, Andrew Pike and Glenys Rowe refers to the Friends as both an "organisation" and a "foundation" and sets out a very positive view of the future relationship between the Friends and "NFSA/ScreenSound". The envisaged collaboration never came to pass.

⁴⁸¹ Tabulated 17 March 2000. 95 responses received. 69 respondents also recorded comments – 66 opposed to name change and gave their reasons, 3 were in favour.

⁴⁸² Not to be underestimated: it was a gesture that has never been repeated, even in more collaborative times.

establishment.⁴⁸³ The following two issues contained articles from the Friends. But by February 2001 the FNFSa had established its own newsletter and an independent voice, and it is never mentioned in *news from the archive* again.

FRIENDS OF NFSA SURVEY ON NAME CHANGE	
And FOX LOCATION	
Strongly opposed	29
Slightly opposed, dubious of its value	37
Neutral	14
In favour of the change	10
In favour of old name	51
Strongly opposed to Fox location	16
Slightly opposed/ dubious/ suspicious/concerned	26
Neutral on Fox location	17
In favour of Fox location	6
No opinion/misunderstood question	30

3.4.9 THE MINISTER WEIGHS IN

39 The Council meeting of 31 March 2000, part of which was attended by the Minister and the Departmental Secretary, and at which I was present, marked a transition in the management of the branding and Fox issues. The bland minutes ⁴⁸⁴ do

⁴⁸³ "I am absolutely delighted to be able to say that a Friends of the Archive group has been formed by a number of prominent figures in the film industry.... I am very excited about this and will be inviting [the Friends] to contribute to our next edition of *news from the Archive*." In print, in Council minutes, and elsewhere, the Friends association is never referred to by its official name but only as 'Friends of the Archive'.

⁴⁸⁴ "Council made a number of points on the matter of ScreenSound Australia's name and 'strapline' as follows:

Council had endorsed the name change to ScreenSound Australia on management's strong advice and were not prepared to renegotiate a subsequent name change. Members were prepared to endorse a change to the

not do justice to the flavour of an encounter with a visibly angry Minister, while the Council itself was in disarray, having neglected to prepare for his arrival by agreeing their strategy beforehand.

His anger was justified. Just days earlier, he had officiated at the Sydney launch of a major sponsored project for the NFSA, at which one of the sponsors had publicly berated the new name, and at which the Minister had been lobbied about the change. He had responded that he thought 'ScreenSound' was great and nobody wanted 'archive' back.⁴⁸⁵ He now understood the strength of the reaction. Why had he not been told? He was henceforth to be fully briefed and see copies of all written complaints. He did not want another name change, and did not think dual branding would work.⁴⁸⁶ He

'strapline'. Two names in the marketplace could be confusing and would need to be managed very carefully. Mr Pike noted a preference for 'film' to be retained in the strapline. The Minister noted that he did not feel that the strength of opinion opposing the name change warranted the attention it was receiving and that he did not wish to see a further name change. Ms Oliver reflected the views of several Council members that the name change issue did not warrant the time and effort going into it by management, and that we should now proceed to work with industry to address the substantial issues and challenges for the future.

Resolution 42/6: In full understanding and acceptance that the Minister may wish to disagree, Council nevertheless agreed to put a recommendation to the Minister that:

The 'strapline' used in the Archive identity be "National Screen and Sound Archive" rather than "National Collection of Screen and Sound". The Archive will manage the use of the two brands so as not to detract from the new identity and the ScreenSound Australia name, and this change would be at no cost to ScreenSound Australia as it is in any case developing new material as it makes the transfer to the new identity.

[In relation to the Sydney office move] The landlord at the Fox site has not delivered on the commitments made when the lease was signed. For example, site management had refused to put up or allow ScreenSound Australia to put up signage, security arrangements are difficult, and the expected spin-offs from the Fox back lot have not materialised. Resolution 42/7: Council agreed that:

Management should make every effort to improve the tenancy arrangements at Fox Studios; in full understanding that ScreenSound Australia may need to complete its current tenancy contract for cost and disruption reasons, management would keep an eye open for alternative locations for the Sydney office; if there was a very good alternative prior to the completion of ScreenSound Australia's tenancy at Fox Studios, Council would consider an early move only on the basis of no cost to ScreenSound Australia. Action:.....advise concerned supporters within the industry that future options will be carefully explored but that ScreenSound Australia is not in a position to incur additional costs in breaking its lease with Fox.

⁴⁸⁵ The Kodak Atlab Collection, a scheme under which the two companies would make and donate new 35mm screening prints of selected Australian feature films, was launched on 24 March 2000. Minister McGauran was lobbied by several senior members of the film industry who were present. (Diary note)

⁴⁸⁶ The Minister had previously approved the dual branding. From the minutes of this and earlier Council meetings, there is an indication that the Chair and some Council members never understood the difference between a formal institutional name and a mere explanatory phrase or 'strapline'.

would not agree to any funding, “not one red cent”, to relocate the Sydney office away from Fox.

By Ron Brent’s account, the Minister was still angry when they met a few days later. Brent had written urging the formal name be changed to *National Screen and Sound Archive*. It involved a small change: ‘archive’ instead of ‘collection’.⁴⁸⁷ Brent’s note stated:

... the rebranding has been very successful, with ScreenSound Australia catching on widely as our identity. As with any rebranding we had anticipated areas of concern from the constituency that expects us to maintain our identity as a national institution⁴⁸⁸. As advised in the original submission it was our intention to manage this concern through appropriate use of our formal name.

He blamed Keystone, who had strongly advised dropping the term ‘archive’. He went on to expound on how the dual brand would operate⁴⁸⁹ but the ground had shifted. In the Minister’s original authorisation⁴⁹⁰ the formal name of the institution was to be used “on its own *or* to clarify the status and role of ScreenSound Australia as required.” Now there was no suggestion that the formal title would ever be used on its own.

⁴⁸⁷ Diary note 12 April 2000

⁴⁸⁸ This anticipation does not seem to have been mentioned when the Minister was originally asked to authorise the name change.

⁴⁸⁹ Note from Ron Brent to the Minister, 4 April 2000: ‘While the notion of having a dual brand for the Archive has caused concern, it is important to emphasise that we will continue to market the Archive as ScreenSound Australia. The formal title will be used to reinforce our new identity as that of a national cultural institution rather than detract from the brand ScreenSound Australia.

“The notion of a marketing brand distinct from a formal identity is nothing unusual. Other close examples are the Powerhouse (Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) and Questacon (the National Science and Technology Centre) but there are many others eg IBM (International Business Machines), Holden (General Motors Holden) KPMG (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler), Woolies (Woolworths) etc. Given the success of “ScreenSound Australia” as our new identity reintroducing the word ‘Archive’ into our formal title will not detract from our intention to present ourselves as an accessible, exciting organisation positioning itself for tomorrow. It will allow us to build this identity on a solid platform of our previous brand and national role.

“If we do not take this approach, I believe we will continue to be distracted from presenting our new identity by our detractors who will find no reassurance in our formal brand. To deal with this issue, I would be keen to have your agreement to using the words “National Screen and Sound Archive” as an advertising by-line in publicity and other Archive documentation where appropriate.

“I recommend that you approve a small change to the original name of ScreenSound Australia as approved by you last year so that our formal name is the “National Screen and Sound Archive”, and that you affirm our intention to continue to market the organisation under the brand ScreenSound Australia.”

⁴⁹⁰ Brent’s memo to the Minister of 12 May 1999

The authorisation finally came on 27 June. Until then the unauthorised de facto institutional name had been *National Film and Sound Archive*, replacing *National Collection of Screen and Sound*. Now the waters would be further muddied by an edict to all staff⁴⁹¹ explaining that the Minister had approved the formal name as *ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive*, which is not quite what he *had* approved.⁴⁹²

3.4.10 MANAGING THE CONSTITUENCY

By mid-2000, the branding and Fox issues had vanished from the Council's and Minister's agendas. Both had made their positions clear and washed their hands of the problem. The Keystone relationship was terminated in August; blamed for bad advice they, too, were out of the picture. Internal paper trails were laid to cover blame or provide post facto justifications for the excesses.⁴⁹³ This did nothing for constituents, whose feedback continued to be recorded. Some eighty comments received up to October, including many from overseas, showed a strong antipathy to the new brand.⁴⁹⁴

In a final soothing gesture, some one hundred and sixty personalised letters from the Director were mailed in October and November to selected constituents, giving a fresh

⁴⁹¹ Email from Ron Brent to all mail users, 26 July 2000.

⁴⁹² Such an unwieldy and redundant formulation was bound to be shortened to the first two words. Yet the Spring 2000 *news from the archive* contained a short item pointing out that the formal name was *National Screen and Sound Archive* and that *ScreenSound Australia* was a contraction of the formal name [which, chronologically, it could not be]. "It replaces the previous shorthand for our organisation, NFSA (an acronym meaningless to the broader public and difficult to recall)" – a judgement with which many might have disagreed.

⁴⁹³ For example, production cost of the 10 minute compilation video prepared for the June 1999 launch had been quoted at \$30,000. Keystone eventually invoiced it for \$155,000. The settlement was negotiated at \$130,000, and claimed to be an 'excellent outcome given the quality of the video and the plans we have for its use in our marketing and promotional strategies'. (Letter Ron Brent to DCITA, 4 September 2000). Before it could be used in these strategies, however, considerable staff time had to be expended clearing rights for the footage it contained.

⁴⁹⁴ 10 in favour, 67 against. For the Fox move, 11 were in favour, 22 against.

explanation of the rebranding and, in some cases, of the reasons for moving the Sydney office to Fox. These recipients were invited to participate in a 'strategic review' of options for its future location, although the fact that NFSA would be staying at Fox for the duration of the lease was not mentioned. In referencing the formal name *National Screen and Sound Archive* the letters ignored facts of recent history, well known to the recipients,⁴⁹⁵ as if they had never happened. Some letters were on *ScreenSound Australia* letterhead, some on limited edition *National Screen and Sound Archive* letterhead.⁴⁹⁶ There is evidence that the letterheads were specifically matched to the recipients, and I concluded the letters were more likely to have a negative than a positive effect.⁴⁹⁷

Regardless of the background turmoil, NFSA staff at the coal face managed as best they could. Many queried the logic of the change, and made their own judgments about management, Keystone and the Council. I documented feedback from many staff members, who saw a failure of leadership at the top, a bad logo, and a mishandled and unexplained name change leaving an apparently unresolvable mess.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ For example, no mention of the first formal title, *The National Collection of Screen and Sound*, or of the original dropping of the term *archive*.

⁴⁹⁶ A very small quantity of these letterheads had been printed for judicious use. It was intended to employ them only for six months and only on occasions specifically authorised by the Director (Public Affairs Minute, 31 July 2000)

⁴⁹⁷ One prominent American archivist told me the letter he received was both "stupid" and "dangerous", trying to explain the unexplainable, and damaging the NFSA's credibility in FIAF. (Diary note)

⁴⁹⁸ There was a pithy comment on NFSA's culture: "It's cautious. People don't always feel free to speak up in case someone above disagrees with them. It may be a better atmosphere than the public service generally, but it could be so much better. We are not leading or pioneering like we should (example: Pandora at the National Library). We're just following. People feel they're not listened to or engaged."

3.4.11 THE COST OF REBRANDING

The vision presented at the glittering launch on 21 June 1999 was of an exciting institution, poised for the future, ready to make its name count and truly reflect its new positioning. There would be the Treasures exhibition in October; there would be the focus on strategic alliances with industry and business. The ScreenSound Foundation would arrive by the end of 1999, along with the commitment to be “even more relevant and accessible to all Australians in the future.” But it was proving an illusion. In the event, the Treasures exhibition did not open until February 2001⁴⁹⁹. There were no strategic alliances, no marketing plan. The Foundation never arrived. All that did eventuate was a problematic new name, a promotional video, a managerial and public relations mess, and the bills. At a rough estimate, the rebranding exercise cost the taxpayer about \$1.8 million.⁵⁰⁰

It was always possible to reverse the rebranding once the mistake became obvious, as it was by early 2000. Rebrandings often do not work⁵⁰¹ and there are ways of backtracking with a minimum of fuss.⁵⁰² Any embarrassment would have been brief and soon forgotten, and NFSA would have grown in stature through the courage to learn from its mistakes.⁵⁰³ But that was a bridge too far. For the second time in ten years⁵⁰⁴,

⁴⁹⁹ In somewhat altered form, as Sights and Sounds of a Nation.

⁵⁰⁰ This is my approximate calculation, and includes the opportunity cost of lost revenue, as well as other costs in cash and kind. Accurate tabulations of fees paid to consultants and suppliers are impossible to glean from annual reports, because large payments to certain consultants (for example, KPMG) are not dissected, nor are all payments reported. The true cost will never be known.

⁵⁰¹ The Consignia experience, in every way a far larger and more embarrassing issue than this, is a case in point (see Chapter 2). That rebranding was reversed after 18 months.

⁵⁰² For example, when the NFSA name was reinstated as the unofficial institutional title at end of 1999, letting it grow back into prominence in steps and managing the ScreenSound brand off centre stage into a specific marketing niche, such as products or exhibitions, ultimately dropping if it didn't work. This had been sensibly proposed and, in fact, agreed to at the ASDA meeting on 6 December 1999

⁵⁰³ Such as Ken G. Hall, one of the giants of the Australian film industry, and a strong supporter of the NFSA whose name is perpetuated in an award given by the institution. In his biography he recalls of his career as head of Cinesound Productions, the major feature film producer of the 1930s: “I made mistakes, God knows. But they were honest mistakes, and we learned from most of them.” Ken G Hall, Directed by Ken G Hall (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1977). p 191

the NFSA had presented its Minister and the Department with an expensive managerial failure. Although wanting to be kept informed, the Minister would not reverse his decision. The new name would stay. The Advisory Council, while not accountable for management's performance, was at least accountable for its own opinions. Yet it passed the buck by saying it had backed management's strong recommendation and was not prepared to renegotiate.⁵⁰⁵ Some members, at least, did not want to look foolish by reversing direction. So no solution was offered, and the proverbial parcel was just passed to NFSA management to sort out as best it could.⁵⁰⁶ In turn, the issues became taboo subjects in formal staff meetings and in Council⁵⁰⁷ where it may have been the elephant in the room.⁵⁰⁸ The effects bordered on the surreal.⁵⁰⁹

Somewhat grudgingly, Council had left the door open for a change in the formal institutional name to *National Screen and Sound Archive*, a change to which the Minister ultimately agreed.⁵¹⁰ It revamped the dual branding strategy which the Minister had originally authorised, on the basis that the formal name would be used in its own right in appropriate 'non marketing' settings. It never worked. The formal name – there were

⁵⁰⁴ The first was the "colour film crisis".

⁵⁰⁵ Minutes of Council meeting 31 March 2000.

⁵⁰⁶ Comments in this paragraph are referenced from Council minutes of 31 March 2000 and related diary notes.

⁵⁰⁷ Reported to me by Council member Andrew Pike

⁵⁰⁸ For example, a staff planning retreat on 17 August 2000 where the branding issue was highly relevant but never mentioned.

⁵⁰⁹ A detached observer at any gathering related to the NFSA from mid 1999 onwards would have been struck by the curious verbal contortions. Depending on the context and composition of the group, participants would try to discern the politically correct terminology appropriate to the occasion. Archive or organisation or institution? ScreenSound or NFSA or NSSA or the Archive? It sounds comical now, but it turned otherwise ordinary gatherings into fraught occasions, as everyone tried to judge the effect of the messages they were sending to their colleagues, and which terms they were perceived to endorse. There were meetings with constituency groups where participants refused to utter the name ScreenSound and insisted on National Film and Sound Archive. There were occasions where the acceptable term was judged to be 'the Archive' so one didn't have to endorse 'ScreenSound' by actually using the word, or risk offence by saying 'National Film and Sound Archive'. The weekend symposium on *National Identity in Australian Cinema*, held at the NFSA on 28 and 29 October 2000, was a good example, both in its debates, and in the careful phrasing of its associated documentation.

⁵¹⁰ Minister's letter of 27 June 2000

four iterations in little more than a year⁵¹¹ – was almost never used in its own right except, it seems, as a device for mollifying complainants. Yet immense time and verbiage was expended on this issue during 1999 and 2000. It was, like other consequences, an aspect of the rebranding's implementation that had not been thought through at the beginning.

RATIONALE – THE INTELLECTUAL COST

The *Annual Review 1999-2000* mentioned that staff had worked hard to explain the rationale for the rebranding to complainants, although the rationale itself is not included in the *Review*. And despite various attempts in newsletters and other documents to explicate the purpose of the change, not necessarily consistent with each other, the crucial element that was necessary to underpin such a radical move by a public memory institution was never created. An intellectually rigorous explanation of the rationale, as a reference point for staff and stakeholders, would have been the least that one could expect from such a body as the NFSA. The lack of such a statement, which should logically have been released at the launch of the new brand and been available thereafter, was eloquent in its own way about the intellectual stature of the institution.

In the absence of such a document, the rationale can only be inferred from a series of statements and documents which have been collated in [Appendix 8, Branding Rationale](#). It has been felt preferable to present them as they stand, without any attempt to unify their arguments, assumptions and assertions.

⁵¹¹ In sequence from June 1999: National Film and Sound Archive, National Collection of Screen and Sound, National Film and Sound Archive, National Screen and Sound Archive

3.4.12 STALEMATE

By the turn of the millennium, January 2001, the branding issue was stalemated. The constituents had made their point. So had the Minister, DCITA and the Council. The issue was no longer newsworthy, face had been saved, and the line could be held. Time was on the side of the status quo and inertia. To correspond, phone or otherwise deal with the NFSA one had to use the ScreenSound name. As a user, contractor or supplier it would be unwise to identify with public criticism. 'ScreenSound' was in phone directories and the email address. In a sense, NFSA was a monopoly without an alternative service provider. One gradually accommodated to the new name. The bureaucracy, where name changes are constant, adapted promptly. New NFSA staff knew no alternative. The Fox controversy abated, since the NFSA had no financial option but to serve out its lease.⁵¹²

The branding problem was eventually resolved in December 2004 *by restoring the original name*, under new circumstances after key players had departed. Meanwhile, resentment and resistance persisted. 'ScreenSound Australia' did not work well. It sounded snappy, but needed constant explanation. It retained all the other limitations identified by constituents who may have had to use the name but never embraced it.

It was not just that the new name did not work. Stakeholders were asserting a matter of principle. The name 'National Film and Sound Archive' meant so much to so many people who had supported, fought for, identified with, and donated to the institution for decades. It had great symbolic significance, evoking personal associations, values,

⁵¹² In a private meeting with representatives of Archive Forum, sought as a courtesy prior to publicly announcing the Forum's advent, Ron Brent admitted that the name change had been unwise and had been poorly canvassed within the industry and archiving community, but that it was not going to be possible to get Government support to change it back. He said the strategy was to focus on the National Screen and Sound Archive name on letterhead, credits and publications but that ScreenSound will continue to be used in conversation. This had already been implemented. The meeting took place on 30 April 2003; two weeks later Brent announced his departure from the NFSA. (Excerpts from record of the meeting.)

knowledge and history. It represented their investment in the institution and its hard-won place in the cultural spectrum. Without consultation or consent, the name had been taken from them through an opaque and dubious process, without a coherent explanation. It was like stealing private property. For an institution that was steward and guardian, not autocratic owner, of the national patrimony, it was a contradictory and unacceptable action. For now, the FNFSa would keep the name active, and it would remain unofficially in currency because it was needed, meaningful and, unlike ScreenSound, self explanatory.⁵¹³

SCREENSOUND PTY LTD - BRAND CONFLICT

This Sydney-based post-production studio was established in November 1998, well before the NFSA's rebranding. It ran full page advertisements in the same journals in which the NFSA was promoting its new name. The Council chair was alerted to the clash in October 1999.⁵¹⁴ It is unclear if any action followed, although the company contacted a NFSA staffer in February 2000 to complain. It had been receiving large quantities of NFSA's emails.⁵¹⁵

I had written an article on the rebranding⁵¹⁶ which, in passing, mentioned this conflict. It was read by the company's principal, Peter Pagac. He explained to me that, since mid-1999, he had been inundated with NFSA emails and correspondence, and his business had been impacted. He had repeatedly asked people at NFSA to fix the problem, to no

⁵¹³ The prominent head of another major memory institution (remarks on file) found the solution, while overseas, was to keep using the name 'National Film and Sound Archive'. Otherwise it was too difficult to explain. (Diary, 4 November 2002)

⁵¹⁴ Letter from former NFSA Council member Anthony Buckley, 14 Oct 1999

⁵¹⁵ The email addresses were almost identical: @screensound.com.au, @screensound.gov.au

⁵¹⁶ Ray Edmondson, "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Governance, Guardianship and the Screensound Saga," Archives and Manuscripts 30.1 (2002).

avail. A newspaper column⁵¹⁷ finally drew a quote from the NFSA Director, but only after Pagac wrote to the Minister in August 2002 did NFSA attempt a resolution.⁵¹⁸

STAKEHOLDERS STEP IN

While the NFSA went about its business in 2001 and 2002, the FNFSa quietly established its presence, its membership⁵¹⁹ and its periodic newsletter. At first, calls to reinstate the original name were diplomatic, since the name of the association was a statement in itself. Over time, however, the message became more overt, recounting earlier struggles for NFSA's autonomy and calling for the NFSA to become a statutory authority as recommended in TIOH.⁵²⁰ The early welcoming sentiments in *news from the archive* vanished as it became apparent that the Friends would be advocates, not quiescent supporters.

They were joined mid-2002 by Archive Forum (AF), a group of knowledgeable and authoritative individuals, qualified to comment on matters of policy and principle, concerned that NFSA was losing its way and needing help to correct the drift. Unlike the FNFSa, it would remain a small and self-appointed group of around fifteen people, so it could function as a lobby group and think tank. Like the FNFSa it, too, would call for reinstatement of the original name and NFSA's creation as a statutory authority, and more beside. Its first chair was author Merle Thornton, a member of the original NFSAAC which had prepared TIOH. The group would announce its advent in mid-2003. Like the FNFSa, it would become a vital player in unfolding events.

⁵¹⁷ Lynden Barber, [The Australian](#) 28 June 2002.

⁵¹⁸ Correspondence with Peter Pagac, various, 2002

⁵¹⁹ 403 members by March 2002

⁵²⁰ Newsletters 1 to 4, from February 2001 to September 2002.

3.4.13 CONCLUSION

In 1999 the Archive was known by a single name, National Film and Sound Archive, and an acronym, NFSA. By 2003 its image had become so muddled that it was known by at least four names and two acronyms, NFSA and SSA. Its product sales had fallen by nearly half. It had lost the confidence of key supporters and inspired a protest movement. It had wasted taxpayer funds and vast amounts of staff time and energy. It had positioned itself outside the mainstream of national memory institutions. It had mismanaged its affairs and embarrassed its minister. It had gained adverse media publicity and was attracting awkward parliamentary questions.⁵²¹ Arguably it had only achieved change for the sake of change, and a legacy consigned to the too-hard basket by its masters. Face had been saved, but at what a price....

One can only speculate how far this legacy influenced oncoming events, though it would be naïve to imagine it did not. Progress towards Executive Agency status was abruptly terminated mid-2001. Instead, the NFSA was pulled into the mainstream of DCITA, no longer a 'semi- autonomous institution' but merely an 'operational group'.⁵²² It no longer issued its separate *Annual Review*.⁵²³ Observers saw indications that DCITA was taking a more intrusive managerial hand, for example requiring reduced public programs and moving resources to preservation.⁵²⁴ From October 2002 *news from the archive* became *On the wire: News from ScreenSound Australia*. It was no longer necessary to emphasise the term 'archive'.

⁵²¹ For example, the answers to a probing series of Estimates questions on notice from Senator Kate Lundy, tabled on 20 November 2002, were a progression of evasions and half-truths.

⁵²² It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if a ScreenSound Foundation had actually been established, as promised. Would its presence have stopped this downgrade in status? Would it have encouraged DCITA to persist with the campaign for Executive Agency status? Would it have precluded the possibility of 'integration' with the AFC?

⁵²³ For the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years, NFSA activities were documented, in much less space than before, in the DCITA annual report as Outcome 4: "increased use, enjoyment and safety of Australia's audiovisual heritage".

⁵²⁴ "From the Director", p.2 in *On the wire*, Vol 1 Issue 1, October 2002

On 11 December 2002, Arts Minister Richard Alston announced a Review of Cultural Agencies. There were rumours that the NFSA would be merged with another agency, yet the Council's minutes and the Director's subsequent comments suggest that the outcome came as a complete surprise.⁵²⁵ On 13 May, Ministers Alston and Kemp jointly announced the result of the Review. Only one major decision emerged from it. ScreenSound Australia would be 'integrated' with the AFC, effective 1 July 2003. The following morning, Ron Brent called a staff meeting at the NFSA, during which he announced his own imminent departure.⁵²⁶ By 30 June, the NFSA no longer had an Advisory Council to speak for it. It lost the direct access to the Secretary and the Minister which it had enjoyed since its creation. It was about to lose control of its

⁵²⁵ Former Director Ron Brent recalls there was a strong push from senior people in the Department to move the Archive out of the Department, irrespective of whether that move put it into a better structure. He was consulted about the possibility of moving the Archive under the AFC. He emailed the Department citing thirteen significant problems with this prospect. He remembered that they included:

- a loss of identity
- the different structures of the two organisations
- the two locations (Sydney and Canberra)
- confusion between the character of the AFC as a policy and funding body and the Archive as an operational body and program delivery agency
- the absence of sound in the AFC's legislative role, name or experience
- the fact that the Archive's closest relationships were not with the film industry, the AFC's stakeholder group, but with libraries, archives, museums, TV and radio stations, record companies and many other organisations and individuals outside the AFC's realm.

He assumed that his warnings had been effective, since he heard nothing more until the outcome of the Review was announced. He observes that all thirteen problems duly came to pass. (Email from Ron Brent, 7 October 2011). Unfortunately the NFSA has been unable to locate a file copy of the email.

⁵²⁶ In an email to stakeholders dated 28 May 2003, Ron Brent advised his departure and noted "this has nothing to do with the amalgamation with the AFC, but is rather a case of very bad timing. I am to be appointed as the Deputy Commonwealth Ombudsman, a position I applied for long before there was any decision to move the Archive under the AFC Act. I have been at the helm of the Archive for over ten years and feel it is time to give someone else a turn. If I was to be selfish I would stay on in this job until I retire, but I do not believe that would be in the best interests of the Archive." He expresses at some length his mixed feelings about leaving "such a terrific job". He mentions 'the Archive' frequently but does not mention ScreenSound once.

In a press release dated 30 May 2003, Council chair Susan Oliver paid tribute to his ten year tenure as Director: "Ron has consolidated ScreenSound Australia as one of Australia's major cultural institutions and secured our national memory.... At one time, Australia stood to lose our record of audiovisual culture, but through Ron's professionalism and dedication, ScreenSound Australia is now firmly established as an icon for world's best practice in archiving these media.... Ron's departure coincides with the end of one era, as ScreenSound Australia grew in its professionalism and position, and the start of a new era where it will become a statutory authority through amalgamation with the Australian Film Commission."

The next day in the *Canberra Times*, Arts Editor Helen Musa covered both brands for good measure: "ScreenSound Australia director Ron Brent is leaving the National Film and Sound Archive after 10 years...He said yesterday the timing was 'an unfortunate coincidence' and that had he known of plans to amalgamate when he was applying for his new job, he would not have left."

budget. It was leaderless, defenceless and alone. The captains and the kings had departed, and the NFSA was passed without its consent, like an unwanted orphan, to a new and obdurate guardian.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ Before he left, Ron Brent contacted AFC CEO Kim Dalton and obtained from him ten assurances and commitments that he felt were necessary, including (a) that the Archive must remain in Canberra (b) the director must retain that status and sit on the National Cultural Institutions forums in his or her own right. Dalton did not adhere to the assurances or commitments. (Email from Ron Brent, 29 September 2011)

3.5 A POLICY FAILURE: THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION TAKEOVER - 2003 TO 2008

3.5.1 INTRODUCTION

For a period of five years, from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2008, the NFSA became part of the AFC.⁵²⁸ The AFC had first entered the NFSA's story in 1976 when it had convened the *AFC Working Party on the National Film Archive* (WP) and thus played a significant role in events leading to the NFSA's separation from the NLA. It had also bankrolled the NFA's reconstruction of *For the term of his natural life* (1981). It had subsequently enjoyed a normal collaborative relationship with the NFSA.

The AFC was an inherently temporary body. As a provider of funding assistance to the film industry it functioned as an arm of government policy. A policy change could result in reshaping or even abolishing the AFC. The NFSA was an inherently an ongoing, permanent body, because that is the nature of archives. Both received annual government operating budgets of around \$20 million, although the NFSA had a much larger staff (about two hundred and thirty, compared to the AFC's sixty), much larger, specialised premises in Canberra, and offices in Melbourne and Sydney. The AFC had office space in Sydney, with a branch in Melbourne.

The transfer of an agency or function from one overlord to another can conveniently terminate unwanted scrutiny of past actions. In this case, DCITA freed itself and its minister from further discussion of a failed rebranding, while the AFC could honestly claim it was a new player, able to take a fresh look at the NFSA.

⁵²⁸ A statutory authority within the DCITA portfolio, established under the *Australian Film Commission Act 1975*. The AFC's functions, as defined in section 5 of its Act, were, broadly speaking, to make films and encourage film production, promotion, distribution and exhibition. Section 5 (d) of the Act also empowered it "to encourage, whether by the provision of financial assistance or otherwise, the proper keeping of films in archives in Australia."

3.5.2 THE REVIEW OF CULTURAL AGENCIES

The Review had encompassed fifteen institutions and agencies including the NFSA⁵²⁹. The terms of reference were not revealed, on the grounds that it was an internal, not a public, review. Its announcement had caused consternation.⁵³⁰ The Review came at a time of vigorous public debate about institutional independence, given the perceived politicisation of the Council of the NMA, and the deskilling of cultural institutions. For example, Professor John Mulvaney found worrying trends at several institutions, including the NFSA:

The de-skilling of ScreenSound Australia extends even to its title. Its pre-1999 name, the National Film and Sound Archive, truly reflected its historical archival function, rather than popularised marketing.... The present Council wisely includes a film historian, but otherwise commercial TV and promotional authorities are prominent. Nobody possesses professional background in film or sound conservation and archiving.⁵³¹

The result of the Review was announced by press release and background paper in the Budget context on 13 May 2003.⁵³² The outcomes seemed largely inconsequential, with minor budget-neutral tinkering, some changed procedures, and the transfer of Questacon to the Education portfolio. It was the final item that stood out:

⁵²⁹ The others were the NLA, NMA, NGA, NAA, Questacon, Old Parliament House, NPG, FFC, Film Australia (FA), (ACA), Australian Business Arts Foundation, AFC, National Maritime Museum (NMM), AFTRS, Bundanoon Trust

⁵³⁰ "Senator Alston said the review was needed to ensure that taxpayers were getting value for money from the earmarked institutions... Several of those contacted by *The Canberra Times* yesterday did not even know the review was underway, while others had already been visited. No one would comment publicly about the process, though one senior administrator said it had generated a great deal of fear and paranoia in the sector about a round of cost-cutting, possible amalgamations, and entry fees. Labor's Arts spokesman, Bob McMullan, said it was a worrying sign the review was being undertaken in secrecy by the Departments of Treasury, Finance, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Arts.... He has called on Senator Alston to disclose the terms of reference, details of submissions and a date for the review's completion." *Canberra Times* 11 December 2002, p. 1

⁵³¹ John Mulvaney, "Cultural Institutions Suffer Deskilling," *Canberra Times* 24 December 2002.

⁵³² No report of the review was released. Along with the terms of reference it will be closed to public access until at least 2023, being a Cabinet document.

The Review concluded that there would be significant advantages in integrating ScreenSound Australia and the Australian Film Commission. The synergies created by combining the resources of the AFC and ScreenSound Australia will provide national leadership in enhancing access to and understanding of audiovisual culture and also enhance their current educational and exhibition activities. Combining ScreenSound Australia's extensive collection....with the AFC's ability to support national exhibition programmes will ensure that more Australians than ever are able to enjoy and learn from ScreenSound's unique resource.⁵³³

How the Review reached this conclusion was not explained. The degree of consultation with the NFSA Director, Council or stakeholders was not mentioned. The meaning of 'integration' was not elucidated: did both bodies retain their identities? Where were the synergies? While there was no public comment from the NFSA⁵³⁴, the AFC issued a complementary release the same day:

By integrating the AFC and ScreenSound Australia, the Federal Government will, for the first time, give clear recognition in Commonwealth legislation to the important work of collecting and preserving the nation's heritage of both screen and sound material. "The AFC recognises that ScreenSound's work in the areas of collection, preservation and documentation is vital to ensure that present and future generations of Australians have access to the content of the archives", said Kim Dalton, Chief Executive of the AFC.

"In integrating the two organisations the Government has identified a significant policy opportunity to enhance its support of audiovisual culture regionally, nationally and internationally. The integration will enable expansion of current audiovisual culture activities, enhance coordination of such activities, and provide leadership with a national focus by what will be a key national cultural institution."

There were three notable obfuscations in the AFC release. First, the claim, to be constantly repeated in Parliament, the media, correspondence and the AFC's annual reports, that "for the first time [this action will] give clear recognition in Commonwealth legislation to the important work of collecting and preserving the nation's heritage of both screen and sound material" was incorrect. The AFC's and the minister's phraseology was careful. No one seemed to remember, or admit, that such

⁵³³ Joint media release by Senators Alston and Kemp, 13 May 2003

⁵³⁴ Whose consent to the arrangement had not been sought. Apart from, some months earlier, seeking Ron Brent's reaction to a possible merger with the AFC, the announcement came as a complete surprise to Brent and, apparently, to members of the Advisory Council.

recognition had existed in the *National Library Act* since 1960, and was part of the Library's justification for opposing the separation of the NFSA in 1984.⁵³⁵ Moreover, the NLA was a permanent entity and a collecting institution, while the AFC was neither.⁵³⁶

Second, this "clear recognition" was being given to the functions per se, *not* to the NFSA as the embodiment of the functions. Under its legislation the AFC would own the functions, because neither the NFSA nor ScreenSound nor any archival entity, nor even the concept of such an entity, would be recognised in the amended AFC Act. This effectively disempowered NFSA as one of Australia's cultural institutions, a fact to which the AFC did not draw attention.⁵³⁷

The third point would prove significant in retrospect. In describing the NFSA's functions, the AFC, the Minister and other spokespeople majored on the NFSA's back-room activities – its collection, technical activity and documentation – while intimating that AFC's expertise was needed to make the national collection accessible. This was nonsense, since the NFSA was a highly accessible institution with national programs, but it served an immediate purpose as a justification for the merger. It would later become a major issue.

⁵³⁵ Sections 4, 6 and 7 of the *National Library Act 1960-1973* contain the relevant provisions, are parallel to and are more extensive than the functions added to the AFC Act.

⁵³⁶ Perhaps explicit inclusion of the term 'preserve' - in the phrase "develop, maintain and preserve a national collection" – might have been represented as an advance on the National Library Act, where it is implicit, if someone had raised the question. The NLA's current interpretation of its Act is "to ensure that documentary resources of national significance relating to Australia and the Australian people, as well as significant non-Australian library materials, are collected, preserved and made accessible...." (source: www.nla.gov.au service charter, accessed 4 Dec 2011)

⁵³⁷ Usually the AFC was careful in the way it represented this. It arguably stepped over the mark in its March 2004 newsletter where it claimed: "The decision by the government to amend the AFC Act and provide statutory authority status to the Archive is an historic first....the AFC Act now provides legislative security and protection to Australia's audiovisual heritage and imposes on the AFC the statutory obligation to collect, develop, preserve and provide access to the nation's sound and visual heritage. A united Archive and AFC unlocks synergies by bringing together the production of cultural product and its preservation for the future within a single organisational framework, a model successfully adopted by many countries..." The countries, however, are not named.

The secrecy of the process, with its surprise outcome, invited conspiracy theories⁵³⁸ since the government steadfastly refused to release the Review's report. In Parliament, Bob McMullan, Shadow Minister for the Arts and a former NFSA minister, voiced his assessment of the Review.⁵³⁹ He discussed the possible merger alternatives for the NFSA, and then turned to the process and intent of the Review:

If the minister wishes to achieve a broad based level of support for this amalgamation, he needs to release at least the relevant parts of the review so that all interested parties can be fully informed about the reason for the amalgamation and can participate in a constructive manner in discussion of how it might be implemented...the decision was taken without consultation with staff or unions affected and...the chief executive officer of the Film Commission and then the director of ScreenSound were consulted only towards the end of the process.

I suspect this matter is driven by two things. The government announced a major review of cultural institutions, and there was both hope and fear – fear that it might lead to swingeing changes that would be terribly detrimental and hope that it might lead to a new focus on those institutions and lead to major changes. Neither of those things happened: it was an absolute damp squib... I think the Government felt it had to make some decision consequent on this report....

... it reflects a total lack of planning ...I think the amalgamation is in effect an afterthought, dreamt up to retrospectively justify the overhyped review...and to resolve the ongoing difficulty about how to provide a statutory authority base for ScreenSound, rather than because there is any particular merit in this particular amalgamation.

Former Arts Minister Peter McGauran would have none of this, and hastened to reassure the House about the depth of the Review:

This is a major step forward which will significantly cement ScreenSound's position as a cultural icon for film, television, radio and audiovisual sectors of the community. We have taken into account after a great deal of thought and contemplation the implications of the cultural objectives of the agencies, the need for appropriate governance arrangements and the relationships with key stakeholders. Integrating the AFC and ScreenSound is going to provide benefits

⁵³⁸ Minutes of an AF teleconference on 10 December 2003 notes several of these: was the AFC, its Board or CEO given 'secret' instructions? Is there an agenda that is not being declared? Is Kim Dalton working under ministerial instructions that have not been disclosed to his board? In a controlled consultation process, is AF being "set up" in opposition to NFSA staff? Does the Opposition know more than it has revealed? Sources suggest the Department and the minister perceived the Archive as a 'problem' and it has been handed to the AFC to 'fix' it. If so, what is the 'problem'? It is tempting to speculate whether this scheme had been behind DCITA's shift of NFSA priorities away from public activities in mid-2002, and to ask when DCITA and AFC began discussions.

⁵³⁹ Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15902-15905

for the two organisations involved but, most importantly, for the constituencies they represent and serve.⁵⁴⁰

That being the case, it seemed anomalous that the “key stakeholders” and constituents were apparently not enlisted in either the “thought and contemplation” of the integration that would deliver such benefits to them, nor in preparing the crucial amendments to the AFC Act. As with the rebranding, the process was hasty and the outcome imposed. Consultation would be strictly post-facto.

3.5.3 CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

Supporters’ frustration and concern about the NFSA had become so great that news of the ‘integration’ was at first received positively, and with good reason. In the past, the AFC had been crucially supportive in the NFSA’s advancement.⁵⁴¹ Here was a circuit breaker, with the chance for a new beginning under new management, and the NFSA had finally been liberated from DCITA. The AFC quickly cemented that impression by contacting stakeholders (including me) to ask for support, promising wide consultation as it developed plans for the NFSA’s future. Kim Dalton made it clear that neither NFSA nor AFC would change their names or relocate their headquarters.⁵⁴² There was every reason to take these expressions of good will at face value, or at least allow the benefit of the doubt.

Both the FNFSa and AF thought so. In announcing its debut, AF’s chair, Merle Thornton said:

We believe that the nation’s film, television, and sound archive should have a secure legal status. It has achieved much through the hard professional work of

⁵⁴⁰ Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003, p 15925

⁵⁴¹ The NFSA and the AFC had traditionally cooperated in certain activities, such as the Big Screen travelling film festival. The relationship went back to WP in 1976.

⁵⁴² Canberra Times, 15 May 2003

its staff, but its legal status has long stayed in limbo... the new initiative linking the Archive to the Australian Film Commission...offers the promise of strengthening the Archive's presence. With the approach of the Archive's 20th anniversary in 2004, Archive Forum's priority is the discussion and development of the potential offered through the new arrangement.⁵⁴³

FNFSA "cautiously welcomed the surprise merger announcement" in a release the next day. Taking a more assertive stance, it added:

The Archive should have a long-term guarantee of a minimum of three dedicated expert positions on the AFC Board. It is essential that the Archive's needs and responsibilities be managed and monitored by people with appropriate credentials in the field, consistent with the management of the nation's other leading cultural institutions.

Restoring the Archive's identity as an unambiguous, world class cultural institution after its ill-considered 'rebranding' as 'ScreenSound Australia' should be a top priority for the new entity. Restoration of its title to the National Film and Sound Archive will hopefully be an early positive outcome of the new merger.⁵⁴⁴

In her regular *Shortcuts* column, (*Metro* No 137, June 2003) journalist Tina Kaufman documented the surprise developments at length. She quoted the departing NFSA Director, Ron Brent, who endorsed the new arrangement, declaring that the change "strengthened ScreenSound Australia's position and potential for the future":

"For the first time, the audiovisual archiving functions of collection, preservation and direct access will be recognised in legislation – giving ScreenSound Australia a statutory mandate for its functions. This new status also offers greater protection to the collection and objectives of ScreenSound Australia, while combining the resources of the two organisations provides the opportunity to establish a unique national cultural institution, strongly positioned as a national leader in audiovisual cultural programs."

Kim Dalton rejected any suggestion that the reason for integration was reducing government expenditure: "It's not a cost cutting exercise. The AFC's budget remains

⁵⁴³ AF media release, 19 May 2003. The release listed the initial 14 members of AF, which included this author, and briefly signalled its vision, which included promotion and debate on strategic issues such as legislation, governance, corporate identity, scholarship and research. It backed the call of FNFSA for the reinstatement of the original name as the Archive's primary public identity, emphasising the words *national* and *archive*. AF had decided to delay announcing its formation until after the Budget, in case rumours about the future of the NFSA proved to be accurate.

⁵⁴⁴ FNFSA media release, 20 May 2003

absolutely intact, ScreenSound's existing budget remains absolutely intact". Kaufman added that Dalton would be CEO of the integrated organisation, that the AFC board would preside over both bodies and exercise corporate governance, that it was expected the Government would appoint several new members to the Commission with experience in archiving and screen culture, and that the Archive would keep a discrete name and identity. FNFSa had flagged some issues of concern. It felt the new head of the Archive must be suitably qualified, the dedicated positions on the AFC Board should be long term, the Archive should continue to have an advisory council of people with appropriate credentials, and the Archive's budget should be maintained and dedicated to archival activities. FNFSa were also concerned that there should be wide constituency consultation before legislation or other serious changes were locked in.

Kaufman quotes Sabina Wynn, head of Industry and Cultural Development at the AFC, picking up on these concerns. The AFC had "heard loud and clear" that the new head of the Archive should have appropriate curatorial and archival expertise. She promised that the Archive would retain its own name, budget and identity:

By integrating our two bodies... the government has ensured that we will become a very strong, combined organisation. The next six months will not only be about bringing the organisations together, it will be about consulting and communicating with the film industry, the screen culture sector, and all those concerned with the future of the Archive. We want to set up a process through which we consult with concerned people, open up lines of communication.

Yet Kaufman was uneasy:

Some observers are concerned that the Archive's position as the most accessed cultural institution in Australia, and its role in social history activities, will be downgraded as the closer ties to the film industry privilege that aspect of its work. Film has always been its highest profile activity, but its work in sound is vitally important, and that sound preservation expertise is needed, not only for sound archives, but for film as well. And the Archive's substantial audio and video output has been aimed more at a social history and educational market than the film community – will this emphasis change?

3.5.4 AMENDING THE AFC ACT

The bill to amend the AFC Act had to be fast tracked through a narrow window⁵⁴⁵ if the amalgamation was to happen on 1 July. It was expected to be non-controversial and gain quick passage. Apart from administrative and transitional matters, the bill's substantive new elements were a definition of the term 'national collection' as:

the programs that are owned by, or are in the possession of, the Commission from time to time; and all material associated with programs that is owned by, or is in the possession of, the Commission from time to time

plus three new functions:

- to develop, maintain and preserve a national collection
- to exhibit, or to make available for exhibition by others, items in the national collection
- to make items in the national collection available to such persons and institutions, and in such manner and subject to such conditions, as the Commission determines

The AFC was further required to “use every endeavour to make the most advantageous use of the national collection in the national interest.”⁵⁴⁶ This enjoiner is also found in the NLA Act. However, these were all functions of the AFC, not functions of the NFSA, ScreenSound or any archival entity. No such entity was to be legislatively recognised.

⁵⁴⁵ Fewer than 20 parliamentary sitting days

⁵⁴⁶ For comparison, Section 6 of the *National Library Act 1960-1973* reads in part:

The functions of the Library are, on behalf of the Commonwealth –
To maintain and develop a national collection of library material, including a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Australia and the Australian people

To make library material in the national collection available to such persons and institutions, and in such manner and subject to such conditions, as the Council determines with a view to the most advantageous use of that collection in the national interest... There are additional provisions after subsection 6(1) providing for purchase, acceptance of deposits, charging fees and so on.

In Section 4, “library material” is defined as including films, sound recordings, photographs, prints and other recorded material .

The *Australian Film Commission Amendment Bill 2003* was tabled in the House of Representatives for its second reading on 29 May 2003⁵⁴⁷ by Peter McGauran, Minister for Science. In his former capacity as Minister for the Arts, McGauran had authorised the NFSA's rebranding in 1999. His second reading speech was adjourned to 18 June, when the major House debate on the bill took place. Never before or since has the NFSA occupied three hours of the House's time, and twenty five consecutive pages of Hansard.⁵⁴⁸ Repetitively, a succession of government speakers lauded the bill, the anticipated blessings of the 'integration' and the 'new era' it would bring. Clearly reliant on identical briefing material, their remarks not only demonstrated a tenuous grasp of Australian film history but almost entirely ignored the nation's sound, radio and television history. In the light of subsequent events they are surely now embarrassing to the speakers. They are not quoted here as they added nothing of substance to the government's position.

The Opposition took the same cautious approach as the FNFSa and AF and did not oppose the bill, but expressed serious reservations on which it sought assurances. Bob McMullan called for the separate identity of ScreenSound or the NFSA to be protected, for an assurance that its 'sound' aspect would not be neglected by the 'Film' Commission, and that jobs would not be lost.⁵⁴⁹ Michael Hatton, also speaking for the Opposition, discerned a fundamental cultural problem in the merger:

⁵⁴⁷ Hansard, House of Representatives, 29 May 2003. p 14924

⁵⁴⁸ Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15902 - 15926

⁵⁴⁹ ...[the government is] hoping there will be some synergy from the integration...but it is not in every way a comfortable fit and some of the synergies, I must say, are rather hard to find. ...over many years it has been an error that we have not given statutory authority basis to the National Film and Sound Archive....I welcome the part of the legislation which gives a legislative basis to the function of collection and preserving Australia's screen and sound heritage. But, on balance, I am not entirely convinced by the arguments....the amalgamation was not a necessary precondition for achieving that goal, and the other arguments, on balance, seem rather weak.

[The minister] did not confirm that the identity, independence and character of ScreenSound would be preserved, but said that the name 'ScreenSound' would continue as a trading name. There is no reference to the continuation of this name or the former name, the National Film and Sound Archive, in the bill or the second reading speech.... The recognition and guarantee of its ongoing independence under the name 'ScreenSound', or the preservation of the name by which most people still know it, the National Film and Sound Archive, is in serious jeopardy. At the moment the AFC, with its exclusive responsibility for the film and visual presentation areas of our culture, does not have a commitment or specialisation in the area of sound, and that will have some implications for

This bill is about pushing together two entities that you would not think would normally and naturally go together.... to take that entity [the NFSA] – whose primary job is trying to keep this material safe as part of Australia’s audiovisual heritage; it is a librarian’s function, an archivists’ function – and conflate it with the Australian Film Commission... the whole idea of an archival screen sound entity will be entirely lost in this process....My great worry is that...this move, well intentioned as it is, to conflate two entirely different approaches to producing and then archiving material, will not succeed. ...so I would ask the government to pause before pressing ahead with this and certainly to review the operation of it, if this merger goes ahead as this bill intends....I think it will be against Australia’s interests.⁵⁵⁰

Arguably the most memorable speech came from Michael Organ, the sole Greens member of the House, and himself a professional archivist.⁵⁵¹ His insight was to prove all too prophetic. The move was, he said, hasty and ill-considered. Given the lack of consultation with the archival community and their expressed concerns, he predicted widespread community comment. Citing the secret review, he doubted the Government’s stated reasons told the whole story. The arrangement could prove unworkable and the NFSA itself would most likely be the victim. Recalling the earlier secret decision to change the NFSA’s name, and advocating its reinstatement, he deplored the “shemozzle” of the government’s management of the institution. It had been run by bureaucrats when it should have been led by people with relevant professional credentials. He went on:

Here we have an unexpected decision arising out of a secret government enquiry ...a radical step without persuasive rationale. We are now confronted with some quick and dirty legislation, devised without professional input or stakeholder consultation....would we treat our other national collecting institutions, such as the National Library and the National Gallery, in such a cavalier fashion? I think not.

Then he turned to the fundamental flaw:

...This bill, which supposedly gives the archive a solid statutory base, makes no reference to it as an ongoing, unique entity. This bill, once passed, will allow for

the future of the board. That is a matter we would like to hear from the government about. (Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15902-15905)

⁵⁵⁰ Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15914-15916

⁵⁵¹ He was and is the archivist of the University of Wollongong. After losing his seat at the 2004 election he joined AF.

the dissolution and disappearance of the archive. It will turn it into an arm of the AFC and nothing more. The AFC will have the power, the CEO and the numbers on the board, and there are no guarantees that the archive will have any representation on the board. The AFC will acquire control of the archive collection and make what use of it it likes.

He anticipated that the NFSA would lose much of its independence. Who would account to parliamentary committees on its behalf? Would it have an advisory committee to represent its stakeholders? He saw no hindrance to the predatory “hiving off” of NFSA functions to become separate units of the AFC. Who will stop them? He concluded by drawing attention to the government’s neglect of what was now a premier international institution:

...since its creation in 1984 as a separate entity the National Film and Sound Archive has pioneered for the rest of the world the concept of the modern audiovisual archive, embracing all forms of moving image and recorded sound media. ...it has become a beacon for the audiovisual archiving movement [in South East Asia Pacific] and has attracted Australian practitioners who are among the world’s leading professionals. Yet it has never had from government the affirmation of legislation and statutory authority status so obviously intended by its creation. It has only ever been headed by career bureaucrats; professional audiovisual archivists have never been allowed to lead it.⁵⁵²

The bill’s second reading in the Senate⁵⁵³ was speedier, with speeches from Senators Lundy (ALP), Ridgeway (Democrats), Brown (Greens) and the minister, Rod Kemp. Like Bob McMullan, Kate Lundy had the NFSA in her electorate and took a personal interest, regularly putting questions in Senate Estimates committees. She made similar points to those raised by McMullan, concerning the weak rationale for the merger, the secrecy of the Review, and the lack of consultation:

I seek further assurances from the minister that the conditions for ScreenSound staff and the functions of ScreenSound in Canberra will not be eroded over time. During the Senate estimates hearings, the minister did not confirm that the identity, independence and character of ScreenSound Australia would be preserved. He did say that the name ScreenSound would continue as a trading name, but there is no reference to the continuation of this name or

⁵⁵² Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15908-15911

⁵⁵³ Hansard, Senate, 26 June 2003, pp 12264 – 12269

ScreenSound's former name, the National Film and Sound Archive, in the bill or in the second reading speech.

...In summary, Labor will be supporting this bill, but I seek these specific assurances from the minister: (1) that staff will not be disadvantaged by this amalgamation; (2) that jobs will not be lost; (3) that the separate identity and name of ScreenSound will be preserved; (4) that the sound and audio section will not be neglected as a result of this amalgamation; and (5) that the activities in the ScreenSound building in Canberra will be continued and indeed expanded.⁵⁵⁴

Senator Brown moved two amendments to the bill – one requiring the AFC's annual report to include a "report of the operations relating to the national collection", which was passed, and a second requiring that "at least three members of the Commission shall be persons who have knowledge of, or experience in, film and sound archival requirements and processes", which was lost, although the minister gave an assurance that "people with the [appropriate] expertise will be appointed." Then he raised the question of the name:

Good intentions can sometimes make bad pavements. I ask the minister about restoring the name to the archive and doing away with the 'Screen Sound' appellation, putting that loss on the sideboard and getting back to calling the archive what it is, giving it identity...we do not call the National Library 'Book Case' and we do not call the Museum 'History Box'. These great institutions should be called what they are.⁵⁵⁵

Senator Kemp deflected the question to the AFC:

Senator Brown, there is a debate about the appropriate name – we are aware of that and you are aware of that. Some people are strong supporters of the name 'Screen Sound'; some would prefer to revert to the earlier name. I think this is something we should leave to the board as it goes through its processes and consults widely with the community. The marketing of the national archive will be done in a separate and effective fashion so that people will know whether we are talking about 'Screen Sound' or the 'National Screen and Sound Archive'. People will know what we are talking about and that is the assurance I can give you.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ Hansard, Senate, 26 June 2003, pp 12264 – 12266

⁵⁵⁵ Hansard, Senate, 26 June 2003 p 12269

⁵⁵⁶ Hansard, Senate, 26 June 2003 p 12269

In concluding the debate, Senator Kemp declared “when the history of the National Screen and Sound Archive is written for this period, this bill will be seen to be a very important development.”

Michael Organ’s comments about “quick and dirty legislation” which made “no reference to the archive as an ongoing entity”, and the consequent dangers to the NFSA, encapsulated the dilemma facing FNFSa, AF and other concerned players. The amendments to the AFC Act were the minimum necessary to transfer the NFSA’s functions and assets. It probably suited the AFC, the minister and DCITA to avoid any unnecessary limitations on the AFC’s future discretion and scope. Organ was right: there was nothing to prevent the AFC “hiving off” functions as separate AFC units, or dissolving the NFSA altogether. Nor was archival representation on the board guaranteed.

Proper recognition of the NFSA as a permanent entity would have required far more detailed and thorough amendments to the AFC Act, affecting the AFC’s structure, legal protections for the collection, potential for legal deposit and so on. It would have required stakeholder consultation, including the circulation of an exposure draft of the bill before finalisation, and would have taken time. Instead, there was a quick fix, rushed through without time to look too closely and in circumstances where the government could assure priority passage through both houses.

Further, any permanent archival entity in the Act would have required a name. At all costs, FNFSa, AF and others wanted to avoid having the name ‘ScreenSound Australia’ locked in as part of the Act. Equally, neither DCITA nor the minister would have found it politic to suddenly immortalise ‘National Film and Sound Archive’ in the Act. In that respect, the legislation left the question of the name open, and this probably suited everyone at that point. Was it better to try delaying the legislation, given its shortcomings? Delay would have meant the NFSA’s continued but uncertain tenure

within DCITA, without the guarantee of an improved AFC amendment bill later, or alternatively a forced merger with another institution, with or without legislation⁵⁵⁷. On the other hand, immediate passage of the AFC Bill was a leap in the dark, with only ministerial and AFC assurances to go on. Could they be trusted?

The issue was forced by Kim Dalton, disturbed enough by Michael Organ's speech to fear the Bill would fail to pass in time. In a teleconference on 23 June involving Organ, FNFSa president Andrew Pike and me, he made undertakings and asked to be trusted, assuring us of the AFC's goodwill. He promised everything, including the name, advisory committee and other concerns, would be resolved to our collective satisfaction. We concluded the AFC could be more easily held to account than DCITA, and took him at his assertive and somewhat aggressive word.⁵⁵⁸ The *AFC Amendment Bill* passed.

3.5.5 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The AFC acquired the NFSA on 1 July 2003.⁵⁵⁹ It now had to embrace an organisation over three times its own size, harmoniously and constructively, and keep its own, and the Minister's, promises. It adopted an aggressive new broom approach with a range of reviews, along with its promised consultation with stakeholder groups and individuals. Kim Dalton nominated Sabina Wynn to lead the process of 'integrating' the NFSA. It began well enough, as comments, suggestions, discussion papers and ideas showered

⁵⁵⁷ Merger with the National Library, for example, would have required no legislation, just the reversal of an earlier Cabinet decision

⁵⁵⁸ Diary notes 21, 22, 23 June 2003. Following a flurry of phone calls over the weekend, Michael Organ, Andrew Pike and I gathered in Organ's Parliament House office on the morning of 23 June with a speaker phone, while Kim Dalton was at the other end in Sydney. Dalton said that the minister was known to favour 'ScreenSound' as a name, and that any moves to change the bill to ensure that NFSA had a specific identity might cause him to insert 'ScreenSound' instead. Dalton said he thought the "ScreenSound" name was stupid and it would disappear, but in a few months' time, under the AFC.

⁵⁵⁹ After Ron Brent's departure, Mary Durkin served as Acting Director, followed by Pam Saunders. In September 2004, Paolo Cherchi Usai took up the post as Director.

copiously on the AFC – the result of considerable thought and much voluntary effort by stakeholders. The process seemed chaotic, as information was urgently sought on issues which then, just as quickly, went off the boil.⁵⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the good will flowed.

But not for long. By early October, uneasiness about the consultation process was spreading. Much was going in, little coming out. Letters were not answered and issues not followed up. NFSA staff were becoming concerned that the Archive would be split up and absorbed within a new AFC structure.⁵⁶¹ At the end of October, the AFC circulated a “Stage One Directions Internal Discussion Paper” to stakeholders. The response was mixed. There was much of value, but crucial topics such as the NFSA’s future structure and its status within the AFC were absent. Fundamental questions about the workability of the ‘integration’ remained ⁵⁶² and these were reflected in correspondence while I was overseas.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶⁰ For example, during July AF was urgently asked for its recommendation on the Archive’s name. After canvassing members, the chair, Merle Thornton, wrote formally to Dalton recommending that the name revert to National Film and Sound Archive, and providing a rationale. Without apology, the matter was then shelved for several months.

⁵⁶¹ On 20 October, in my capacity as AF Secretary, I sent an update message to members of Archive Forum. Excerpts: “I’m getting the impression that Sabina is unable to grasp the overall institutional concept of the Archive, and to understand how a national collecting institution differs from a funding/promotional agency like the AFC. It appears that the basic practicalities of how the Archive retains its autonomous institutional character within the AFC are not being addressed. I’m not sure how far the issue is even understood. I’m also concerned about the methodology. Much is going in but nothing of consequence has come out. There is widespread concern that the Archive will be “gutted” – split up and absorbed within a new AFC structure.” AF teleconference minutes of 10 December 2003 noted considerable staff unhappiness. “Well researched information provided by staff is being ignored. They are being talked at rather than listened to. [In Sabina Wynn’s view] there are 230 people at the Archive...who think they are doing everything perfectly.”

⁵⁶² The formal response from AF (17 November 2003) to the Stage 1 paper was made in my absence overseas. It noted the absence of a proposed organisation structure and the importance of keeping the Archive organisationally intact within the AFC structure. Individual members fed into this response, one member noting his belief, from experience overseas, that an “audiovisual archive can never exist as part of an organisation that owes allegiance to the audiovisual industry...an audiovisual archive needs to be treated like a national museum or art gallery, be independent of other organisations and have its mission statement defined in national legislation. However, if integration with the AFC is a fait accompli as I expect it is, every effort should be made structurally to ensure the audiovisual industry is not in a position to determine archival policy or override archival principles and practices.” Another member commented “the paper puts forward a range of significant and unsubstantiated generalisations about current archive practice as the basis for its recommendations”.

⁵⁶³ In emails sent during my travels to AF members I commented: “I’ve picked up impressions from various meetings and received a great deal of feedback from Archive staff who have been involved in the current consultations. I have concerns about the outcome of what has proved a highly controlled consultation process. It is some years since I have seen good professional people in the Archive so demoralised and devalued by a consultation process. It is widely believed that the Archive is going to be dismembered and subjugated within a revised AFC structure, and its budget plundered for other agendas.

I had emailed Kim Dalton from overseas with my concerns about the consultative process. This was, after all, the man who had pleaded for support six months earlier and had promised that everything would be resolved to my satisfaction. When I met him in Canberra on the morning of 11 December 2003, I was talking to a totally different person. Now he was in charge. He said he had found the NFSA sadly lacking in management and rigour. He would brook no criticism of Sabina Wynn. He said that same afternoon he would release her *Stage 2 Directions* paper on the NFSA's future and it would be open for public comments – of which he clearly anticipated very few, since the closing date was 23 January.⁵⁶⁴ The AFC had been given a task and it would be done. He saw the AFC/NFSA merger as the 'final solution'. He acknowledged that the legislation was inadequate.⁵⁶⁵

Perhaps the ACT's Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, had a premonition. Two weeks before, on 29 November, the *Canberra Times* had carried a story by Arts Editor Helen Musa headlined "Call to keep ScreenSound intact". It read, in part:

Mr Stanhope said the merger of ScreenSound with the Australian Film Commission, represented a downgrade for the organisation...

"The Howard Government has made cuts to national cultural institutions located in the ACT that are both savage and short-sighted", Mr Stanhope said, citing \$8 million in funding cuts to the National Gallery, the National Museum and the

"Fears of job losses have been compounded by perceptions that the Archive will be dismembered and 'integrated' into the AFC in such a way that it will be difficult to unscramble it in future. Staff feel their views and expertise are discounted, that Sabina has her own agenda and does not understand the nature of the Archive or the professional expertise it entails. 'Consultative' meetings have been described to me in which Sabina does most of the talking. At one meeting, Kim lost his temper with one particularly valuable and mild mannered staff member who asked what seemed to be a reasonable question about transparency. Staff have now expressed their concerns to their union (AMWU)... The review process has been highly controlled and largely one way, and Sabina has held all the cards. I think we may be in for some shocks." (Emails 19 and 23 November 2003)

⁵⁶⁴ Dalton admitted that this embraced the holiday period when most people would be away, but opined that plenty of people would be back at work mid January, which would give them a whole week to respond. (Diary, 11 Dec 2003)

⁵⁶⁵ Recollections drawn in part from a briefing note sent to AF members on 11 December 2003 at 5.37 pm, before I was aware of the events that had unfolded in the afternoon after my meeting with Dalton, and which he did not foreshadow during our discussion. In the note I added: "[Dalton] has a view about changes that are needed in the Archive. He would like to make them with the support of stakeholder groups but I think he has anticipated the possibility of proceeding without that support."

National Archives. “We are now hearing suggestions that some functions of ScreenSound Australia may be transferred to Sydney”, he said.

The chief executive of the Australian Film Commission, Kim Dalton described the Chief Minister’s comments as “somewhat speculative. We’re in the midst of a review looking at all aspects of the programs” he said. ...the purpose of the review was to support, not destroy, ScreenSound. Director of Ronin Films and Electric Shadows Cinema in Canberra and a long-time supporter of ScreenSound Andrew Pike, said his understanding was that the review would result in an enhanced, upgraded ScreenSound. Mr Pike said he expected the review to be generally positive.

And so everyone fervently hoped!



Fig. 4: A week is a long time in politics: *Canberra Times* front pages for 12 and 18 December 1999 (Source: Canberra Times)

3.5.6 “DIRECTIONS’ – THE AFC PLAN

On the afternoon of Thursday 11 December 2003, Kim Dalton released the AFC’s *Stage Two Directions Paper on the AFC-ScreenSound Australia integration* (which I will call, for simplicity, *Directions*). On the same afternoon, the ten most senior staff, comprising the leadership and the corporate memory of the institution, were informed that their positions had been made redundant. The shock announcement made the main page one headline in the *Canberra Times* the next morning:

SACKINGS AT SCREENSOUND

Six of the leading staff at Screensound Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, were made redundant yesterday in a move which has stunned the film and archival industries. It is not clear yet how many jobs will be lost from Canberra, but in a paper dealing with the Australian Film Commission's integration with ScreenSound it is clear more positions will go from the ACT under the new arrangements. The news was delivered to shocked staff on the eve of ScreenSound's annual Christmas party.⁵⁶⁶

.... [it] was delivered by the Sydney-based chief executive of the Australian Film Commission, Kim Dalton, who had told a Senate Estimates hearing on May 28 just after the merger was announced in May's federal Budget that he did not anticipate any job losses. Mr Dalton left quickly for Sydney yesterday without public comment, leaving assistants to outline details of the changes to ScreenSound staff.

..... Former deputy director of ScreenSound Ray Edmondson said yesterday he was "just stunned" by the news. Those made redundant were highly respected people with huge collective knowledge and international reputation. "They are people who have devoted a lot of their working lives to the archive," he said.... A staff member who preferred not to be named said that decisions to close the shop, halve the exhibition space, reduce the marketing section from eight staff to one and abolish the production unit which made videos, CDs and DVDs would have detrimental flow-on. The review of merger possibilities had been done by people with no background in managing a public institution.

A spokesperson for the federal Arts Minister Rod Kemp said yesterday that the minister.... had no comment to make on the redundancies. Senator Kemp had assured the Senate... that staff would not be disadvantaged. Opposition spokeswoman on the arts Senator Kate Lundy said the Howard government had "lied" over the ScreenSound merger with the AFC....

For the next week, the NFSA dominated the front page of the *Canberra Times*, while letters, leading articles and editorial cartoons developed the story. Local ABC news carried interviews with Kim Dalton, compiling clips so listeners could hear Dalton contradicting himself. An estimated eight hundred people attended two 'Save ScreenSound' rallies in front of the NFSA building, one of them timed to coincide with a meeting of the AFC Board at the NFSA, thereby ensuring they viewed and heard the event through their meeting room window. With Senator Lundy and other speakers in attendance, and many staff disobeying the prohibition against participation, the strength of feeling was not lost on the NFSA's new masters. Lundy launched a petition

⁵⁶⁶ Dalton declined to stay for the festivities.

calling on the government “to reject any recommendation that seeks to undermine ScreenSound Australia as a national institution located in Canberra”. Liberal senator Gary Humphries and Greens MP Michael Organ added their voices and lobbied the minister, as did NFSA colleagues overseas, who by now knew what was happening. It was an unprecedented demonstration of protest and community support.

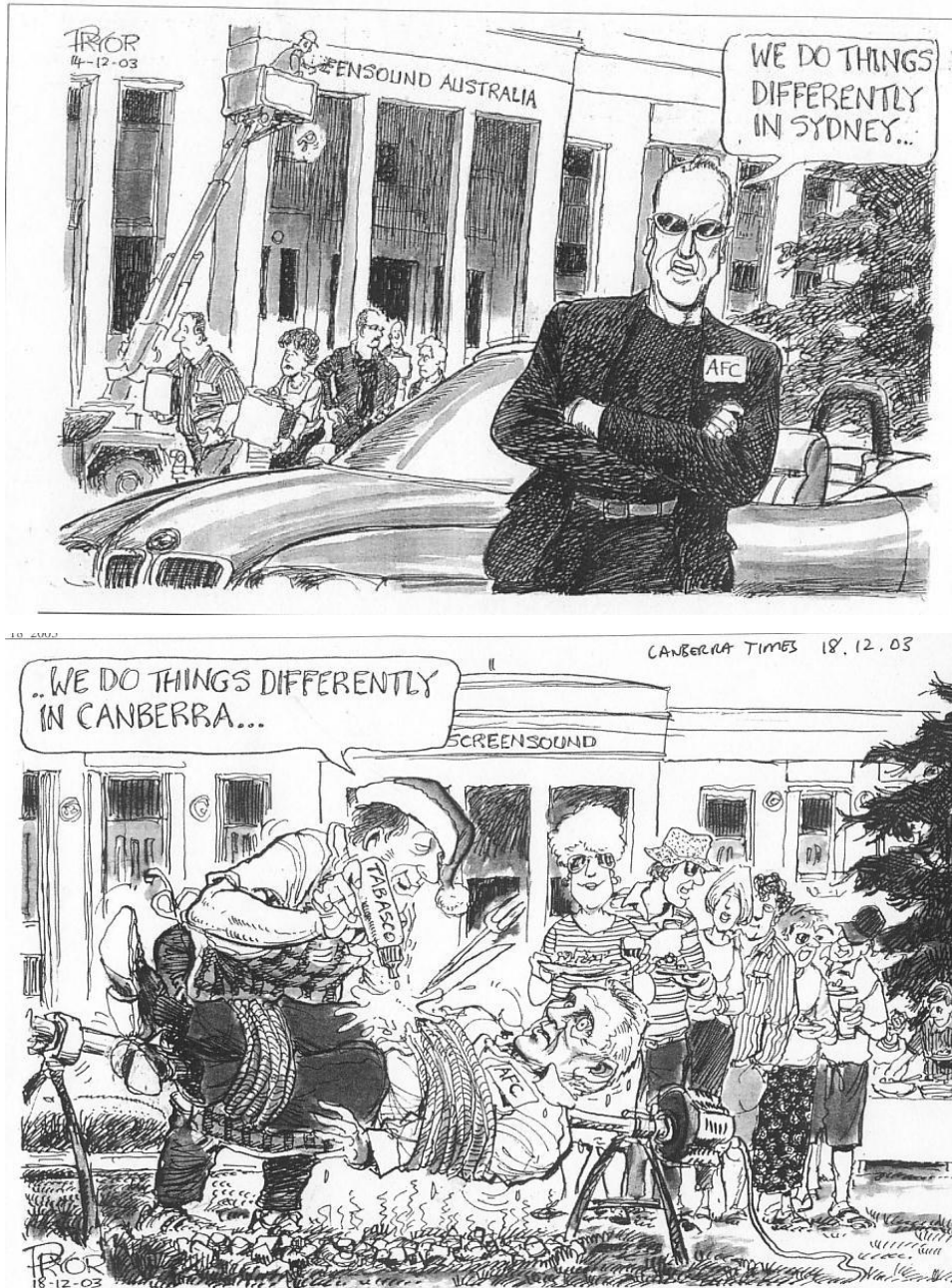


Fig.5: Geoff Pryor cartoons in the *Canberra Times*, 14 and 18 December 1999. The second cartoon was inspired by the course of events during the week. It is AFC CEO Kim Dalton being roasted on the spit. (Source: Canberra Times)

In an op-ed piece⁵⁶⁷ Dalton insisted that ScreenSound Australia was not being dismantled: “the core functions of collection, preservation and access remain in Canberra”. He hit back at his critics: “A campaign of misinformation and misrepresentation has been orchestrated, assisted by careless journalism. The claims ...are at best simply inaccurate and at worst inflammatory and highly irresponsible”. But in the end, the AFC blinked. On 17 December it issued a statement in which Dalton promised that “no jobs will be lost, including senior management, and no existing functions [and] senior management positions will be moved out of Canberra.” The statement added that the “deadline for responses to the *Directions* paper has been extended from 23 January to 16 February to further accommodate concerns and a series of forums will be held around the country... before that date to assist.... consultation.”

The week’s events had transformed the ‘consultation’ into an ongoing conflict. Senator Lundy noted that “ScreenSound Australia was today granted a brief reprieve from the threat of major job losses...and it is only because of the voices of staff and supporters around the world that the Howard Government has been forced to back flip on these cuts...but we do not believe the fight to save ScreenSound is over”⁵⁶⁸. In a personal public newsletter, the now former FNFSa president, Andrew Pike, describing himself as an ‘archive watcher’ for 30 years, warned “a small victory has just been won....but this wins a battle, not the war”:

The AFC invites feedback on its *Directions* paper, and talks about its content as proposals. But the AFC’s pre-emptive action ... gives a message that [it] has made up its mind on all major matters and is not really interested in the opinions of the Archive’s constituency. The basis for negotiation, discussion and trust has been effectively undermined...

... by divesting the Archive of major cultural functions, the AFC is more interested in expanding its own existing culture branch at the expense of the Archive.... it gives a message that the AFC has a low opinion of the Archive and its role in the community and is keen to make sure [its] new director does not have too much power....

⁵⁶⁷ Kim Dalton, “The Future of Screensound Is Not under Threat at All,” [Canberra Times](#) 17 December 2003.

⁵⁶⁸ Kate Lundy press release: Brief reprieve for ScreenSound won by Community Action 18 December 2003

If the Minister and his government had respect for the Archive as one of the nation's major cultural institutions, it would not have dominated the Archive's Council with unqualified people over recent years. It would also have given the AFC clear directions about preserving the integrity of the organisation. The Minister was clearly derelict in his responsibilities to the nation when he struck his deal with the AFC.

...the AFC has demonstrated a fundamental lack of respect for the Archive's senior staff and a frightening lack of skill in managing human resources. This is surely not the best way to handle transition to a new organisation and win the confidence of staff, industry and the general public.⁵⁶⁹

Why the sudden public outpouring of support for the NFSA? It was not without precedent, since a groundswell from stakeholders led to the NFSA's separation from the NLA, and a tide of opposition greeted the rebranding in 1999. But such street demonstrations in Canberra were unusual. Was it symptomatic of a need to respond to the Howard government's perceived depredations on the Public Service, the cultural institutions, and the status of Canberra itself? ⁵⁷⁰ It did set boundaries which the AFC never crossed in its attempts to dismantle the NFSA.⁵⁷¹ The *Canberra Times*' stance was pivotal. It knew of the pressures on all the cultural institutions. Clearly an editorial decision was taken to run hard on the issue.⁵⁷² Without that daily media focus events may have developed differently. Two leading articles, on consecutive Saturdays,⁵⁷³ took a sober review:

There were good reasons why ScreenSound Australia – as the national film and sound archive perhaps unwisely chose to call itself – should have been taken out of a departmental framework and put on a business management basis, with all the flexibilities that an archive, museum and education centre should have. There were, perhaps, some superficial attractions to the idea of linking it with the Australian Film Commission.... What now seems clear is that it involved very

⁵⁶⁹ Andrew Pike, "The Film and Sound Archive: What's Happening at Screensound Australia?," (Canberra: 2003)

⁵⁷⁰ See, for example, Kate Lundy press release 12 Feb 2004

⁵⁷¹ It is known from subsequent dealings with the Minister and the AFC board that the experience was sufficiently traumatic to make them wary about a repeat occurrence.

⁵⁷² Even to the extent of analysing Kim Dalton's penchant for impenetrable bureaucratese. Columnist Crispin Hull analysed some of Dalton's interviews with ABC radio's Chris Uhlmann and wrote a highly entertaining piece. Crispin Hull, "Why Don't Bureaucrats Like Kim Dalton Say What They Mean?," *Canberra Times* 20 December 2003. Geoff Pryor contributed apposite editorial cartoons.

⁵⁷³ *Canberra Times* editorials, 13 and 20 December, 2003. Sections of both are merged to convey the flavour.

little sense of partnership at all, and that the film commission, of about a quarter of the staffing size, has completely subsumed the archive in any sort of planning and policy terms.

[*Directions*] is a document with a vision for a national film and sound archive with expanded functions...but it is... apparent, from the reaction, that much of the “vision” comes through outsiders’ eyes, that little has been done to involve or imbue existing staff with it. Moreover the commission believes not only that objections represent mere staff conservatism and unwillingness to change but that the organisation cannot move ahead with the leader which it has had.

It does seem clear that whatever is planned cannot be regarded as part of... a Federal Government “agenda” against Australia’s cultural institutions. Empire building, and the redesigning of empires in the likeness of new managers seems more likely.

Before the merger, the archive suffered in being caught within a departmental framework, contrary to the recommendations of an expert body which had recommended statutory authority status for it. It has also suffered from managerialist views in the formal arts bureaucracy, which had thought there to be too many independent “artsy” bodies about, with the taxpayer likely to benefit from “rationalisation”. Such rationalisation rarely proves rational.

...a new review of the archive should be looking at the future of the archive through archive-oriented spectacles, rather than from the perspective of sales, spin, public relations and flim flam that suits the character of the commission. ... if the formula requires sacking successful leaders, dispensing with experience and technical expertise, and substituting hucksters for managers, then the prognosis will not be a good one.

3.5.7 THE RESPONSE TO *DIRECTIONS*

Directions aspired to be a vision document of greater significance than TIOH, which it summarily dismissed. While a comparison is instructive,⁵⁷⁴ as a report from a government agency for whom policy and report writing is a *sine qua non* it was likewise dismissed by the retired head of another major cultural institution as “one of the worst

⁵⁷⁴ TIOH was the product of fourteen months of deliberations by a twelve person expert committee and a drafting group, some eighty public submissions, and various public meetings and workshops. The result has been admired and imitated internationally, and vindicated by time. *Directions* was prepared in a few months by a manager with no archival background, and very brief overseas exposure. The advice and submissions of perhaps two dozen stakeholders, as well as NFSA staff, was available but not well or ethically utilised.

pieces of drafting he had read for many years.”⁵⁷⁵ My own assessment, published in the *Canberra Times*, was similarly harsh.⁵⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Kim Dalton declared that he was “confident that this paper represents a thoughtful and rigorous base from which to integrate the operations and programs of the Archive with the AFC”.⁵⁷⁷ *Directions* proceeds from several unstated assumptions. It holds that radical transformation of the NFSA is needed; that even though the Archive is the larger entity, the AFC should review the Archive and not vice versa; that the reviewer did not need to have professional archiving background and expertise; that restructuring should take place before the appointment of a director, not after; and that the NFSA is not a coherent institution but a set of functions which can be separated and rearranged at will.⁵⁷⁸

Directions envisaged a dismantled institution. Public programs and education are transferred to Sabina Wynn’s Industry and Cultural Development Branch in Sydney, and most of the Canberra public presence is closed. Collection development is split between Sydney and Melbourne. IT, legal and support services are ‘integrated’ with existing AFC operations. Product development is closed, and the NFSA website is subsumed in the AFC site. The rump NFSA would be a back-room operation handling preservation, client

⁵⁷⁵ Email 29 January 2004. The critique: (a) It has no executive summary (b) Its recommendations are not grouped for easy reference (c) It has no logic. Starting on the principle that “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”, it should lay the groundwork for its recommendations. For instance (1) defining the assumptions and givens (2) defining the problems and issues: what works, what doesn’t (3) evaluating the organisation’s strengths, weaknesses, needs (4) weighing options, pros, cons. (d) It does not spell out the resource and personnel equation (e) It does not justify its proposals and consequences, nor evaluate alternatives (f) It relies on rhetoric, jargon and assertion instead of referenced advice (g) It obfuscates (h) It does not allow the possibility of partial or total rejection. There are no options, priorities, alternatives.

⁵⁷⁶ “As a blueprint, *Directions* is a sorry piece of work. It is superficial, often poorly researched and inaccurate, and its author(s) demonstrate limited understanding of archiving and archiving principles – and of this archive in particular. It is biased..... it conveys a laudatory impression of the AFC’s superior knowledge while pointing up the Archive’s perceived deficiencies. It [views] the Archive through the relatively narrow perspective of the Australian film industry and screen culture..... audio gets short shrift, as do broader non-industry responsibilities, collecting older material, and paper and object holdings, to name a few.

“...Kim Dalton pointed out...that the paper includes new ideas and changes requested by staff and stakeholders. True, but it also pointedly ignores key issues stressed by both. Pleas to maintain the professional autonomy, identity and structural integrity of the Archive as a national institution have fallen on deaf ears. Nor is there a word about the underlying philosophy and ethics... which the proposed new structure blatantly contravenes.” Ray Edmondson, “AFC’s *Directions* Paper Biased and Superficial,” *Canberra Times* 18 December 2003.

⁵⁷⁷ Message to ‘external stakeholders’ from Kim Dalton, 12 December 2003

⁵⁷⁸ Archive Forum, *Cinderella Betrayed: The Shoe Won't Fit* (2004). p 11

access, and collection development and management. It would be re-badged the 'Australian Film and Sound Archive'⁵⁷⁹. A low level committee meeting twice a year would handle constituency consultation.

There were over one hundred and twenty public submissions,⁵⁸⁰ clearly many times more than the AFC sought or expected by its original deadline of 23 January 2004. An analysis⁵⁸¹ revealed that eighty seven were critical of *Directions*, whether questioning particular recommendations or dismissing the entire document as inadequate and lacking analysis. A large majority said that the institutional integrity and identity of the Archive should not be disturbed. Those mentioning the name were generally averse to 'ScreenSound', preferring a self explanatory name, with 'National Film and Sound Archive' the most popular. Forty one submissions wanted separate legal status for the NFSA independent of AFC. Many queried the original logic of the marriage.

The submissions included Senator Lundy's Senate petition calling for a retention of jobs and functions in Canberra (1432 signatures), and a 'prominent persons' statement from AF (see below) calling for separate statutory status for the NFSA (265 signatures). Numerous protest emails and letters were sent to the AFC and the Minister. There were scores of messages on the CPSU website, as well as views expressed in the "stakeholder forums" (see below). Many industry organisations whose members were clients of the NFSA, such as SPAA, ASDA, and FACTS, were conspicuous by their absence in the submission list, although some individual members signed the petitions. From my direct

⁵⁷⁹ This is comfortably close to 'Australian Film Commission'. If the sound component was dropped, as there was a later attempt to do, it would become 'Australian Film Archive'. It is a short step from there to the 'Australian Film Commission Archive'.

⁵⁸⁰ According to a feature on the NFSA in the AFC's March 2004 newsletter. I hold hard copies of 107. To its credit, the AFC posted all of them on its website at the time, although an attempt on 4 November 2010 to access them via the relevant hotlink on the AFC's archived website was unsuccessful. Either the hotlink was broken or the documents have been removed. I had previously retained copies of most, or possibly all, of them in hard copy or electronic form.

⁵⁸¹ The analysis was of 107 submissions, as at 1 March 2004, done by me at the time and the results published in the NFSA newsletter #9, May 2004.

experience, and from observations communicated to me by others, it was evident that the AFC applied pressure on those organisations and individuals which it subsidised.

By far the longest submission came from AF - a “major and damning report which received wide circulation”⁵⁸². Titled *Cinderella betrayed: the shoe won't fit* it refuted *Directions* section by section, and was unequivocal in its judgment:

Nothing in Archive Forum's discussions with the AFC had foreshadowed the scope or thrust of [*Directions*], which, without explanation, contradicts earlier undertakings. During six months of consultations, Archive Forum and others believed the AFC was accepting advice in good faith and – inter alia – had agreed with Archive Forum's repeated counsel to respect the structural integrity of the Archive. It never revealed its intent to do the opposite. Nor had Archive Forum and its members expected their constructive criticisms of the Archive, offered in good faith during the consultation process, to be used out of context as justification for radical action. The AFC's claim of 'extensive consultation', in any genuine sense of listening and learning, rings hollow.

[*Directions*] communicates as a *fait accompli* action plan, rather than a set of proposals... the basis of trust and accountability between AFC management and the Archive's constituency... now no longer exists.... we now reluctantly conclude that the AFC's lack of understanding of the nature of a National Film and Sound Archive is so fundamental as to prevent effective coexistence of the two entities within one authority. What is at stake is the NFSA's very survival as a national heritage institution.

Although Archive Forum entered the review process...in a spirit of cooperation and even hope, it finds *Directions* so damaging overall that Archive Forum has no option but to reject it as a whole. *Directions* does not offer a valid or workable framework for the Archive's future, or a basis for further consultation.⁵⁸³

Stakeholder groups like FNFSa, AF and ASA were now ranged in opposition to AFC and were vigilant in publicly exposing '*Directions* by stealth' over the next two years, until circumstances changed⁵⁸⁴. In the end, most *Directions* recommendations were never implemented and most public programs stayed with the NFSA. Although AFC claimed to

⁵⁸² Christopher Puplick, *Being Heard: Achieving an Effective Arts Advocacy*, Platform Papers (Currency House, 2008). p .50

⁵⁸³ Selected from Archive Forum, *Cinderella Betrayed: The Shoe Won't Fit*. pp 5-14

⁵⁸⁴ Following Kim Dalton's surprise resignation from the AFC in January 2006, its stance changed markedly and *Directions* was formally withdrawn by the AFC chair, Maureen Barron.

be working on the one hundred and twenty-plus submissions,⁵⁸⁵ no analysis was published, and there is no evidence that those who lodged submissions ever received any response to their comments or suggestions.⁵⁸⁶

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION FORUMS

Following release of *Directions*, the AFC organised five by-invitation consultation meetings in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne during January and February 2004. The invitation from Kim Dalton read, in part:

As part of the process of integration, after wide-ranging discussion and consultations with the archiving and audiovisual industries and stakeholders, the AFC released a Directions Paper in December 2003 seeking feedback on a range of proposals as to the future programs of ScreenSound Australia. A summary of the proposals is attached, along with a message from the [AFC] chair Maureen Barron.

I am writing to invite you, or a representative of your organisation, to a stakeholder discussion forum on the Directions paper as part of the ongoing consultation process. AFC chair Maureen Barron will be present, along with other Commissioners and senior staff of the AFC and ScreenSound Australia to discuss the proposals contained in the Directions Paper, as they pertain to the future programs of the National Screen and Sound Archive as an integrated part of the AFC.

Also appended was a “Directions Paper Fact Sheet” listing a range of archival programs ostensibly belonging to the NFSA, but which omitted to indicate that some programs would be transferred out of the NFSA into the AFC.

The gatherings did not quite proceed as advertised. While Maureen Barron and other AFC commissioners were in attendance, they did not, as promised, participate in

⁵⁸⁵ AFC Newsletter, March 2004: “The Archive’s Kate McLoughlin is formally reviewing and summarising the content of the submissions themselves. Key topics and issues that emerge from her analysis will be followed up and feedback analysed in detail to inform the nature of further consultation and the development of advice on the transition to one organisation.”

⁵⁸⁶ Certainly, neither AF, FNFSa nor ASA ever received any response.

discussion but sat in the meetings without speaking. The AFC's 'independent' chair, Mark Armstrong, limited the agenda to the contents of *Directions*, specified that the meeting would last exactly two hours, and that AFC commissioners were there to listen but not speak. All comments and questions were directed to Armstrong, who then called on Dalton to respond to several questions at a time. There was no direct dialogue. This tightly controlled format worked only part of the time. The anger of some participants was not constrained by the circumscribed agenda. In Canberra, one participant asked how the damage the AFC had done was going to be repaired. In Melbourne, a participant called for a straw poll on whether the NFSA should be separated from the AFC and be an independent authority. The meeting voted unanimously in favour.⁵⁸⁷ Some NFSA senior staff were present. They contributed occasionally, when necessary, but they did not lead the discussion and were obviously required to support the official line of their employer.

To its credit, the AFC posted its transcripts of all five meetings on its website. Not that it made much difference: the controlled format and the behaviour of the commissioners was demonstration enough of the gulf between the NFSA's constituents and the AFC board and executives, who scurried off to their waiting taxis immediately the meetings were over.⁵⁸⁸

3.5.8 BEGINNING THE DRIVE FOR STATUTORY INDEPENDENCE

In responding to *Directions*, Archive Forum decided the only way forward was pressing for statutory autonomy for the NFSA. After submitting it to the AFC, the Forum released

⁵⁸⁷ On 6 February 2004, the *Canberra Times* reported on the Canberra meetings. It said that "Kim Dalton told those present he had been misrepresented by the Press, and had never threatened staff losses...cinema owner Andrew Pike described the atmosphere as 'very tense'....Roland Manderson, of Greens MLA Kerrie Tucker's office drew a round of applause when he wondered why the AFC had not used archival expertise to help put the *Directions* paper together."

⁵⁸⁸ I attended both Canberra forums. There were about fifty people at each. Maureen Barron and Kim Dalton sat in the front row of the NFSA theatre with their backs to the audience. The other commissioners sat at the back of the room. The AFC had its 'plants' in the meeting to ask pre-arranged questions.

Cinderella publicly on 25 January 2004, along with a press kit summarising the issues and the NFSA's history, plus a guide for protesters making their voice heard to relevant politicians, the CPSU and the AFC. The covering press release said in part:

FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE FIGHTBACK

The Australian Film Commission is under attack from within its own industry over a takeover of the National Film and Sound Archive, a world leader in its field. Archive Forum, a national group of film industry people and Archive users, says in its report *Cinderella betrayed* released today, that the National Film and Sound Archive needs to be a separate institution and not part of the AFC.

Melbourne writer and filmmaker Ms Merle Thornton, the chair of Archive Forum, says: "The AFC's proposal is biased, ill informed and unsubstantiated. If the AFC goes ahead it will mean the death of one of Australia's great institutions and seriously put our audiovisual heritage at risk".

Ms Thornton says the Film Commission's consultation process is lacking in transparency. It is unbudgeted and it failed to adequately consult the archive's huge constituency which includes the public as well as historians, film makers, TV broadcasters, researchers, ad makers, academics, donors, students, film libraries, state libraries, radio stations.⁵⁸⁹

The release achieved good coverage.⁵⁹⁰ The public stand-off between AFC and stakeholder groups, which would continue intermittently in the media and parliament for two years and more, had begun in earnest. The AFC insisted that everything was proceeding well⁵⁹¹ and sent some barbs at its critics:

"It seems to me the Archive Forum is saying 'no, you shouldn't – this is the way ScreenSound has always operated and this is the way it should continue to operate'", Dalton says.⁵⁹²

"What we're willing to do is have a discussion. The Archive Forum, by continuing to make its claims, is undermining a valuable discussion. ... The level of transparency in administering ScreenSound will be greater now than when it existed as part of a government department" Dalton says. "To suggest that

⁵⁸⁹ AF press release 25 January 2004. At this point, AF, at the personal expense of its members, had engaged a professional publicist to manage media contact.

⁵⁹⁰ For example, The *Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 February, the *Age* on 3 February. On 4 February, ABC Radio National aired an entire *Deep End* program on the issues, including interviews with Kim Dalton, and Deb Verhoeven and myself representing Archive Forum.

⁵⁹¹ As in the AFC newsletter for March 2004

⁵⁹² Lynden Barber, "Row Heats up over Film and Sound Archive " *The Australian* 10 Feb 2004. p 14

governance will be lower is either paranoia on the part of the Archive Forum, or is intended to be obstructive.”⁵⁹³

The same day, AF wrote to the Prime Minister, explaining in detail why the connection to the AFC could not work, making the case for its creation as a separate statutory authority, and enclosing a package of supporting information.⁵⁹⁴ By then, AF members were already soliciting support from prominent Australians for a public statement on independence for the NFSA. Viewed today, the assembly of the signatures, each one secured in writing, was a huge enterprise for a voluntary group. The statement read:

We who have signed this statement believe that the National Film and Sound Archive must be an independent body and that its integrity and autonomy should be protected by legislation. We recommend that:

- 1 The National Film and Sound Archive be established as an independent statutory authority of the Australian Government
- 2 In the meantime, the AFC should act as caretaker of the NFSA and keep it intact as an autonomous entity within the AFC
- 3 Dismantling of structures already begun be reversed, and no further changes occur until a new Director of the Archive is appointed, and there has been a renewed process of consultation with stakeholders and Government which is proper, expert, open and extensive.

The statement was publicly released on 15 February. Its “who’s who” of signatories included former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, film directors Peter Weir and Phillip Noyce, actors Geoffrey Rush and Bryan Brown, cartoonist Bruce Petty and author Tom Kenneally.⁵⁹⁵ Again, it gained wide media exposure. The release was timed to precede the relevant Senate Estimates Committee hearings, which took place on 17 February, and it was widely circulated to parliamentarians.

⁵⁹³ Bernard Kellerman, “Screensound: The Final Countdown ” *IF magazine* March 2004. pp 58-59

⁵⁹⁴ There was no response from the Prime Minister, merely a reply from his office a month later to advise that the letter had been referred to the Arts Minister, Rod Kemp.

⁵⁹⁵ There were 265 signatories in all, some signing after the release date of 15 February. Other “names” included playwright David Williamson, broadcaster Anne Deveson, composers Anne Boyd and Peter Sculthorpe, television presenters Peter Luck and Caroline Jones. Former chairs of the NFSA Advisory Council, Susan Oliver and Victoria Rubensohn, and several former members, also signed. The list was thickly salted with people bearing honorific postnominals.

Meanwhile, on 12 February Senator Kate Lundy called a press conference in front of the NFSA to announce the ALP's commitment to establishing the NFSA as a separate statutory authority when it came to government.⁵⁹⁶ The same evening, Lundy spoke in the Senate:

It is with great pleasure that Labor was able to announce its policy today relating to the future of ScreenSound in the context of ongoing attacks including the undermining by the Howard government of ScreenSound Australia through the proposed changes being managed by the Australian Film Commission. Labor announced today that a future Latham Labor government will establish the National Film and Sound Archive as a statutory authority to ensure that it remains a vital and independent part of Australia's cultural heritage.

The Senator went on to say that although Labor had given support to the AFC Act Amendment Bill, that support had been "conditional upon the promises to preserve the independence, integrity and identity of ScreenSound Australia" and that the *Directions* paper was a breach of those promises. She concluded the AFC connection offered no scope for the NFSA to preserve its integrity, independence and "capacity to continue its fine work":

It is on that basis that Labor are very proud to pursue a policy of undoing that merger.... I would like to honour and acknowledge the role of Archive Forum, which has been instrumental in garnering the depth of understanding that has inspired so many people's passionate protection of this institution. Labor are pleased to be part of that campaign.⁵⁹⁷

Senator Lundy's announcement gained wide media coverage, suggesting that she and AF had made a coordinated push to get statutory authority status on the agenda.⁵⁹⁸ The public jousting between AFC and stakeholders continued in this vein until the October federal election, in which NFSA supporters naturally hoped for a Labor victory. It was

⁵⁹⁶ Press release, Senator Kate Lundy, 12 February 2004: Federal Labor's plan to establish ScreenSound Australia as a Statutory Authority

⁵⁹⁷ Hansard, Senate, 12 February 2004 pp 20230-20232

⁵⁹⁸ I have no recollection that there was any coordination. The ALP policy formulation would have had a longer time trajectory, and clearly could not be announced until after it was adopted at the party conference, which Lundy describes as "recent". The conjunction was useful for media exposure but was ignored by the AFC and the minister.

during this period that the AFC appointed Paolo Cherchi Usai as Director of the NFSA. He assumed his post in September.⁵⁹⁹

Given the unsatisfactory AFC 'stakeholder consultations', FNFSa and ASA decided to mark the first anniversary of the merger by convening a joint conference on *The Future of the Archive* in Canberra on 3-4 July 2004, also attracting participants from Sydney and Melbourne. By invitation, three political parties - Labor, Greens and Democrats - fielded speakers presenting their party's position on the NFSA.⁶⁰⁰ The Minister (for the Coalition) declined the invitation, dismissing the conference as "just a lobbying exercise."

The Conference communiqué⁶⁰¹ contained twenty six resolutions, and called on the AFC to address in detail all the responses to its *Directions* paper. It argued that national public programs should remain an integral part of the NFSA, and affirmed the need for it to be a separate statutory authority. Memorably, the conference adopted a general statement of principles:

If war is too important to leave to military men, as the politician Lloyd George said, then national culture and identity is too important to leave to the politicians.

National cultural institutions are public property and national treasures. The stakeholders have a civic duty of cultural stewardship over them, and the management of these cultural assets is a government but not a political function.

In particular, we recognise that a civic duty of cultural stewardship exists for those people whose creative labour has produced the materials in the archives, museums and libraries; for those whose intellectual effort identifies the value of

⁵⁹⁹ Paolo Cherchi Usai was a film archivist, intellectual and author of solid international reputation. He was a co-founder of the annual Pordenone Silent Film Festival, and most recently had for several years headed one of America's most venerable film archives, the Film Department of George Eastman House, in Rochester USA. During this time he established the Selznick School of Film Preservation, which rapidly became one of the world's premier training courses for film archivists. An individualist, he would in time create his own controversies, and he would also have to manage the competing forces of the AFC and vocal stakeholders: a classic "ham in the sandwich" situation.

⁶⁰⁰ Senator Kate Lundy, Shadow Arts Minister represented Labor; Roland Manderson represented the Greens; Roslyn Dundas represented the Democrats.

⁶⁰¹ Friends of the NFSA, Communique.

the collections; for those who labour to curate and preserve the collections; and for those who use the collections.

In the first instance such institutions should be answerable, like the Auditor General, to the Parliament as representative of all the people, and not to the government. Having such institutions report to Parliament is symbolically and actually to recognise that their role is to serve the public interest, as principally identified by the organisations themselves.

We call on the Australian Commonwealth Government to legislate to quarantine important national cultural institutions like (but not limited to) the National Library of Australia, National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, Australian War Memorial, National Archives of Australia, National Maritime Museum and the National Film and Sound Archive from the manipulation of the government of the day.

The AFC and the Minister ignored the communiqué. The watchful Tina Kaufman, in her *Metro* column did not, pursuing a comprehensive overview of events.⁶⁰² As the election drew closer, AF maintained its output of press releases⁶⁰³ and the ASA called on the AFC to “immediately provide a comprehensive public response to the Society’s submissions on the AFC’s controversial *Directions* paper lodged in February”. It also wanted an immediate response to the resolutions of the *Future of the Archive* conference, and called on the AFC Board to explain its non-communication with stakeholders in recent months “while still proceeding to implement *Directions* proposals and reduce the autonomy of the Archive.” Finally, it called on the incoming government to quickly establish the NFSA as a statutory authority separate from the AFC.⁶⁰⁴

Readers of the AFC’s *Annual Report 2003-04* would, however, gain a very different picture of the merger’s first 12 months:⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² Tina Kaufman, *Shortcuts*, Metro #142, October 2004

⁶⁰³ For example, *Directions by stealth* 16 August 2004, *Incompetent film body wastes money* 22 August 2004, *What do we want* 15 September 2004

⁶⁰⁴ ASA press release: *Archivists want action on National Film and Sound Archive* 20 September 2004. The text of the full resolution was attached.

⁶⁰⁵ AFC *Annual Report 2003/04*: Executive Overview.

In July 2003 a review of the Archive's current programs commenced, with a view to identifying where the synergies between the previously separate Archive and the AFC's existing programs could be leveraged to maximise access to the Archive's unique collection for all Australians. The review looked at the effectiveness and national reach of existing programs, opportunities arising for strategic delivery of programs, the possibility of new programs, particularly in areas of screen culture and the emerging online environment, to improve access to the collection. The AFC engaged in an extensive consultation process, with an issues paper released to staff and stakeholders for comment. Out of this process a proposals paper was developed and, again, released publicly for feedback. In addition, a series of public forums were held in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane, at which open and lively debate was facilitated, along with extensive staff consultation sessions. Over 120 written submissions were received and are available to read on the AFC website...

The AFC welcomed the resulting debate over the variety of proposals suggested. The heightened interest and level of discussion over the Archive's role and function serves to highlight the importance of the collection, and underlines the AFC's commitment to collecting, documenting, preserving and providing access to Australia's screen and sound heritage. While the proposals and submissions are under consideration – and no decisions relating to Archive programs have been taken in the absence of a permanent Director for the Archive – a number of significant achievements of the AFC and for the Archive have been attained...

The list which follows reveals nothing the NFSA would not have done independently anyway, had it been allowed to do so, as well as some 'integration' steps that proved distinctly wasteful and counter-productive. There is no mention of any unpleasantness, protest, "orchestrated campaigns of misinformation" or "careless journalism"!

AFTER THE ELECTION

The October 10 election returned the Coalition to office. Disappointed stakeholders had to face the prospect of another three years of AFC domination. After twelve months of furious activity it was not an inviting prospect. But the goal of statutory status remained. Now it would be a long haul, finding the best *modus vivendi* and, as far as possible, protecting the integrity of the NFSA in its present circumstance.

Stakeholder groups demonstrated that they were not going away.⁶⁰⁶ They provided the Opposition with questions for every Senate Estimates hearing, so the Minister and the AFC would know that the NFSA would always crop up. At the same time, the groups could engage with a new, qualified Director in Paolo Cherchi Usai, and publicly support him and his vision for the NFSA which, to some degree, kept the AFC's predations of access activities at bay. The AFC revised the *Directions* concept of an advisory committee, establishing a group, chaired by the Director, on which stakeholder bodies were represented. It met as often as required, and could engage actively with the internal operation of the NFSA. Since Cherchi Usai was appointed by the AFC it was compelled, up to a point, to support his views. He served as a non-confrontational conduit between the AFC CEO and stakeholders.

In 2005 Chris Puplick assumed the chair of Archive Forum. A former Liberal Senator and Shadow Minister for the Arts, he was well placed to establish personal rapport with Minister Rod Kemp and his successor George Brandis, and with Kim Dalton and his chair, Maureen Barron. The need for vigilance remained: while there were no more demonstrations or dramatic media coverage, the public comment, press articles, resolutions and parliamentary scrutiny continued, as did the AFC's fundamental hostility.

⁶⁰⁶ A Melbourne supporter reflected on what constitutes a stakeholder: "We are all so different, and with such very different relationships with the Archive. I depended on the Archive for my research, and forged strong bonds with those staff who helped me along the way. I felt more like a colleague than a client. I assumed that my research would feed into the Archive's broader purpose, and it was a great relief to me that the staff accepted this and smoothed the way for me, at a time when I just could not have afforded to pay full price for viewing fees, etc. It is those kinds of personal bonds that make the stakeholders so passionate, and that fuelled Archive Forum." (Ina Bertrand, email 27 September 2011)

3.5.9 NFSA IDENTITY AND PROFILE

In December 2004 the ScreenSound brand was quietly abolished, and the original name restored.⁶⁰⁷ Yet the pressure to submerge the NFSA's identity within the AFC was relentless, despite promises to the contrary.⁶⁰⁸ High profile NFSA activities, like the restored version of *The sentimental bloke* premiered at the 2004 Sydney Film Festival, and annual events like the Ken G Hall award and the Longford Lyell lecture, were re-badged as AFC activities. The entire *Directions* thrust of moving public programs out of the NFSA into the AFC likewise put the AFC identity in the ascendant at the NFSA's expense.

The Melbourne and Sydney offices of the NFSA each lost their separate physical existence and visibility, and were relocated, like trophies, into the AFC's central business district premises in both cities. This made their subordination visible, while making life less convenient for users in each city. In Sydney, the symbolism of the Fox location was replaced by the arguably even less palatable symbolism of the AFC. In both, parking, and therefore access, was now more difficult.⁶⁰⁹

Subordination was enforced in other ways. The NFSA lost its logo, being required to use the AFC logo and to style itself as 'a division of the Australian Film Commission'. All

⁶⁰⁷ There was no formal announcement. The original name simply reappeared on stationery, websites, signage, business cards and so on. It took journalists a little time to pick up on the change.

⁶⁰⁸ Peter McGauran: "The separate identity and name of ScreenSound will be preserved...there is a need to lift its profile in the general community ...the National Film and Sound Archive will retain its identity under the new arrangements" Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15925, 15926; Kim Dalton: "We consider it to be very important, as we have always said, that the archive has a distinct identity – an identity which is distinct from the Film Commission's identity and one that can operate independently, so that the Archive can have a presence which is independent of the AFC". Senate Legislation Committee for Environment, Communication, Information Technology and the Arts, Estimates hearing 17 February 2004, p ECITA 58

⁶⁰⁹ "I was particularly annoyed by the forced shift of the Melbourne office into the AFC building. The Archive's office had been well equipped and so convenient for someone like me who had to travel by car. The AFC office was much less convenient to reach, and particularly for parking." (Ina Bertrand, email 27 September 2011)

email addresses were standardised in the AFC's favour⁶¹⁰. In the telephone directory, the NFSA was listed only under the AFC entry, not under its own title.⁶¹¹ All NFSA invoices were prepared on AFC stationery. It seems the aim was to reduce the NFSA's visibility to the point where it would be indistinguishable from the AFC.⁶¹² Fortunately, the AFC's cover was blown when an anonymous staff member leaked copies of new intended stationery designs to the FNFSa. The covering note⁶¹³ from the AFC's Manager, Publishing and Communications, set out some design principles:

The aim of these designs is to help us see ourselves as part of a single organisation and to present ourselves as such...

Beyond letterheads, business cards and invoices, distinct profiles can be...developed and promoted for particular purposes (such as the promotion of the NFSA as a cultural and educational destination in Canberra), as long as the relationship to the AFC as a whole is also established at the same time.

The FNFSa revealed the strategy in its newsletter⁶¹⁴ for November and December 2005, recapping the AFC's broken promises and lack of accountability.⁶¹⁵

The AFC imposed complete control over staff access to the media. NFSa publicity was controlled from AFC Sydney headquarters, and not even the NFSa Director could speak to the media without first getting a clearance from Sydney minders on each occasion.

⁶¹⁰ e.g. joe.bloggs@afc.gov.au – not @screensound.gov.au or @nfsa.gov.au

⁶¹¹ Some of these issues were raised with the minister by Senator Bob Brown, Questions on notice, 1 Nov 2005

⁶¹² That is, letterheads and business cards would be dominated by the AFC and Australian Government logos, with an address in small type underneath. The words "National Film and Sound Archive" would be at the head of the address in the same small type.

⁶¹³ Dated 27 June 2005. The note asked for feedback on the draft designs by 6 July

⁶¹⁴ November and December 2005

⁶¹⁵ FNFSa Newsletter #15, December 2005: "The AFC does not answer questions or participate in open debate. It has never responded to the resolutions and questions arising from the conference on the Future of the Archive, organised by the Friends and the Australian Society of Archivists in July 2004. It has similarly ignored questions publicly tabled by other stakeholder organisations. It has never responded to the 140-plus public submissions it said it was so eager to receive, and which flooded in during early 2004. It is regularly quizzed in Senate Estimates Committees but manages to stonewall questions, as the Hansard record shows. The AFC does not, it seems, feel bound by its own promises or those of its minister. Now donors will be unclear whether they are giving material to the NFSa or to the AFC. They may end up deciding they can't take the risk and not deposit at all."

Staff were gagged, specifically so during the demonstrations or other awkward public occasions.

3.5.10 THE PROBLEM WITH SOUND

In September 2005, reliable rumours reached Archive Forum that the AFC was negotiating to transfer the NFSA's sound recording collections and activities to the NLA. The attraction was obvious. The NLA would regain one of its 'lost' functions,⁶¹⁶ while the AFC would divest itself of the NFSA operation which lay outside the comfort zone of a 'film' commission. It would also shrink the NFSA, turning it into a rump film archive, and easier for the AFC to control and absorb. This confirmed suspicions that the AFC really was uncomfortable with sound.

It was grave news. Such a move would destroy the concept of the NFSA, making it far more difficult, if not impossible, to extricate the surviving film archive from the AFC, to say nothing of the associated administrative upheaval. It also seemed a number of personal agendas might be furthered by such an arrangement. At a meeting with Kim Dalton, AF chair Chris Puplick raised the issue. Dalton admitted there had been informal discussions with the NLA, although no 'official' approach had been made so the AFC did not yet have a position on the matter. Puplick expressed surprise that the AFC would not immediately reject any such proposal outright, and defend the integrity of the NFSA from any attempt to weaken its role and position. When subsequently updating the Minister, Puplick made it clear that AF, FNFSA and others would publicly and vigorously oppose such an assault. It would be a clear dishonouring of the government's assurances and its stated commitment to protect and develop the NFSA. The Minister

⁶¹⁶ The belief that the NLA was cheated in 1984 is, to my knowledge, still held by senior staff of the time and was unequivocally articulated by Harrison Bryan in his still current writings. (See [Appendix 7](#).)

seemed unaware of the proposal. He gave the impression that he would not warm to it, nor to the prospect of another major public confrontation.⁶¹⁷

What happened next is speculation, but by the confidential account of one person present at the relevant meeting, the proposal came as a shock to the AFC Board. It would have contradicted the Chair's own public undertaking that "the AFC has given an unequivocal commitment to the development of, and access to, the sound collection".⁶¹⁸ In any event, the AFC's official position, in a statement of 23 November 2005, was:

There is no substance to the rumours that the AFC is divesting itself of the sound collection. To the extent that there is any suggestion of this, it is being generated by external stakeholders. The Commission has made a commitment to maintain the sound collection, and a long term strategy for the development of the sound collection is currently being formulated.

Be that as it may, the fact of the approach from NLA, formal or otherwise, was later confirmed by the AFC Chair Maureen Barron. It was rejected by the Board.⁶¹⁹

3.5.11 TRANSITION: KIM DALTON DEPARTS

On 12 January 2006, Kim Dalton announced his surprise resignation as CEO of the AFC, to take up the post of Head of ABC Television. His departure elicited contradictory accounts:

The announcement yesterday surprised Mr Dalton's colleagues, including Maureen Barron, the AFC's long serving chairman. "He's been a wonderful leader, in fact his contract has been renewed so he wasn't planning to leave us" [she said].The AFC's integration with the National Film and Sound Archive was

⁶¹⁷ The meeting was on 21 September. Puplick remembers his comment to Dalton was that the NLA should be told to desist and that any proposal to remove any part of the NFSA's collection should be killed off at the rumour stage. Christopher Puplick, Andrew Pike and Ray Edmondson, NFSA History, rec 2 October 2008, Canberra.

⁶¹⁸ Included in the "Statement from AFC Commissioners", given over Maureen Barron's name, that was part of the package distributed to participants in the "stakeholder forums" in January and February 2004.

⁶¹⁹ During a meeting on 6 February 2006

managed without drama, and in the past few years the AFC has begun funding low budget films...⁶²⁰

When the news flashed around... there was quiet rejoicing in Canberra. Dalton's peremptory way of handling change continued to irk archive staff and anyone who has had to battle through the Commission's minders to get to local staff in Canberra....Dalton's authoritarian approach, no doubt exacerbated by the 2003 demonstrations, led to a ludicrous bid for control, leaving no room for individual opinion or ideas to come from Canberra, though an elaborate round of consultations in early 2004 attempted to wallpaper over the process. The result has been a feeling among staff that they are working under a hostile colonial occupation.

As the euphoric effects of Thursday's announcement wore off, archive-watchers were taking a more cautious view, one commenting that it remained to be seen what a difference his departure would make. Even the most optimistic archive supporters...know that change at the top will not lessen the need for vigilance, nor resolve the fundamental contradiction in the archive's enforced attachment to the commission.⁶²¹

Much of the generous media coverage of Dalton's move to the ABC was laudatory. Yet notwithstanding Maureen Barron's praise of him (above), the AFC's *Annual Report 2005-06*, under her chairmanship, contained no retrospection or tribute to his seven years at the helm of the AFC, and only a cursory mention of his departure.⁶²²

Dalton's departure brought a rapid thaw in relations between the AFC board and principal stakeholders. A meeting on 6 February 2006, on Barron's initiative, allowed a frank exchange of views. AF and FNFSa emphasised the NFSa's need for statutory independence, asking the AFC to acknowledge that inevitability. They nevertheless agreed to support the AFC in its stewardship of the NFSa while present arrangements pertained, trying to ensure the promises made by government in 2003 were honoured. The AFC reversed previous moves to diminish the NFSa's identity. It would again have

⁶²⁰ Michaela Boland, "Dalton Shock Switch to ABC," [Financial Review](#) 13 Jan 2006.

⁶²¹ Helen Musa, "Relief but Apprehension at National Film and Sound Archive over Dalton's Move," [Canberra Times](#) 14 Jan 2006.

⁶²² In June 2007 Dalton was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). The citation read: "For service to the film and television industry as a leader in policy debate amongst government agencies and the industry, as a mentor of independent and indigenous producers, and as a promoter of emerging visual technology".

its own logo, stationery, email address, website and so on. For the NFSA's remaining tenure with the AFC until mid-2008, the *entente cordiale* worked reasonably well. It seemed that the greatest challenges to the NFSA's recovering identity would be within the AFC itself, where Acting CEO Chris Fitchett had to confront entrenched senior staff loyalty to Kim Dalton.⁶²³

⁶²³ The evidence is anecdotal, but consistent with some AFC staff attitudes as experienced by this writer and NFSA staff over the duration of the merger.

3.6 REACHING A NEW BEGINNING: THE NFSA ACT 2008

3.6.1 THE LAST LOBBYING DOCUMENT

While the relationship with the AFC was now more harmonious, statutory authority status for the NFSA remained a distant goal. It was still the policy of the ALP, Greens and Democrats, but the government and DCITA adhered to their stance on integration with the AFC. By 2006, it was long enough after the merger to assess its success or failure. Such a move was unlikely to come from government.

What emerged was a public document, expressing the official joint stance of AF, FNFSa, ASA and the Australian Historical Association (AHA, representing academic historians) and bringing together the strands of argument and experience over the previous three years. Released on 10 July 2006, it tabulated the broken promises, documented and explained not only how but why the current model had failed, why it was dangerous, why it could never work and why there was no alternative to creating the NFSA as a statutory authority. It set out the intellectual, philosophical and professional basis for this objective. Collectively, the four associations represented some 1500 professional people and their collective credibility.⁶²⁴ Titled *Independent statutory authority status for the National Film and Sound Archive*, the document was sent electronically to every member of the national parliament, and to a wider distribution list, with a covering press release.

The story was carried by e-news service ScreenHub:

⁶²⁴ Ironically, it was the obvious failure of the AFC's heavy handed approach which tended to underscore the paper's arguments and to discourage consideration of yet another bureaucratic linking of the NFSA with yet another host. In a back-handed way, the AFC's stewardship may have done the NFSA a favour.

NFSA: CAMPAIGN THAT NEVER DIED

It seems the NFSA still hungers for freedom. Despite public quiet, the various interest groups have combined to publish a campaigning report which wants the NFSA to have its own 'statutory base and legal personality'. (If you are not careful, that last phrase could be very distracting.)

Professor Chris Puplick AM, Chair of Archive Forum said "the AFC has a job to do and we will assist the AFC under current arrangements, however the AFC does not have the required expertise to run the NFSA. In 1984, the NFSA was established to preserve and make accessible the nation's audiovisual heritage and to do this reliably, efficiently and effectively it needs to be independent and autonomous, as defined by UNESCO, the International Council of Museums, the Australian Society of Archivists and other authorities.

The NFSA is by nature a permanent entity, but is under the control of the AFC, an inherently impermanent body, without safeguards for its continuity beyond the AFC's life. The NFSA has lost the governance protections available and the present arrangement has failed to gain the endorsement and support of the NFSA's constituency.

...the Federal government claimed that the 'integration' of the NFSA into the AFC would create 'synergies' to benefit both bodies. Undertakings were made that the NFSA's identity, budget and institutional integrity would be protected and advanced. It is time to review whether the public good has been served as a result, and whether the undertakings have been honoured. On all counts, the assessment appears to be negative.

and among other things it brought an entertaining riposte came from Shadow Arts Minister, Peter Garrett.⁶²⁵

⁶²⁵

CUPID'S ARROW MISSES ITS MARK

Minister Kemp's foray into the art of wedding planning has been a failure, as this weeks' report published by [the four associations] clearly shows. The report is critical of the 'arranged' marriage between the [NFSA] and the [AFC] resulting in "differing perspective, conflicting agendas, incompatibilities, and reduced accountability and transparency". The findings of the report again reinforce the need for an independent and autonomous body to collect and store Australia's audiovisual heritage, which has been Labor policy since the 2004 Election....

Unless Minister Kemp can provide evidence to support his claim in 2003 that the merger would "provide national leadership in enhancing access to and understanding of audiovisual culture and also enhance their current educational and exhibition activities", then it's time for him to act. The imminent release of Labor's Arts Policy Discussion Paper, which canvasses the possibility of a merger between the AFC and the Film Finance Corporation and related film bodies..., provides the government with an ideal opportunity to remove the NFSA from under the AFC and restore its independence and autonomy. If as reported yesterday in *The Australian*, Arts Minister Kemp believes "the current arrangements are appropriate" then he is seriously divorced from reality. (Release dated 13 July 2006. Garrett was the lead singer in the band *Midnight Oil*, whose recordings are well represented in the NFSA collection.)

In the context of the May 2006 Budget, the government had announced a Review of film funding support. The joint paper, with some covering argument, was duly submitted by the four associations to the Review. Whatever effect the paper may have had on the Review – and possibly it had no effect at all – it fulfilled other purposes, setting out the fundamental case for action, and during the year that the Review was proceeding, reminding the Labor Opposition of its promises for the NFSA and giving it solid justification for them.

To no-one's surprise, a year later the Review recommended exactly what Garrett had proposed, but with a significant exception. The NFSA would remain part of the combined body, to be called Screen Australia. Consistent with the recommendations of the Uhrig report⁶²⁶ the Government wanted to reduce, rather than increase, the number of statutory authorities. Although the new Arts Minister George Brandis was sympathetic to separating the NFSA, DCITA opposed altering the existing arrangements.⁶²⁷

If carried through, nothing would change for the NFSA. However, before the legislation could be passed, the federal election intervened on 24 November 2007 and Labor won government.

3.6.2 THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE ACT

After the years of struggle, the final outcome was almost an anticlimax.

⁶²⁶ John Uhrig, Review of the Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders (2003).

⁶²⁷ Puplick, Pike and Edmondson, NFSA History.

Following the election, AF and FNFSa were quick to remind the new arts minister, Peter Garrett, of his own and his party's promises. Apparently keen to give Garrett some early political wins, the Labor government moved quickly. The *Screen Australia Bill* was rewritten to excise reference to the NFSA, and a *National Film and Sound Archive Bill* was prepared. They would travel in tandem through Parliament. In the background, AF and FNFSa had the fleeting opportunity to comment on the draft Bill, and their feedback was reflected in the Minister's second reading speech. Meanwhile, there were rapid negotiations involving AF and FNFSa to divide the AFC's assets, and ensure that the NFSA reclaimed what belonged to it. The NFSA Bill was tabled in the House on 20 February 2008 and received Royal Assent on 23 March. Crucially, since the Coalition remained in control of the Senate until June, the Bill needed support by all parties. The new Shadow Minister for the Arts, Dr Sharman Stone, spoke strongly in favour when debate resumed on 12 March.⁶²⁸ In contrast to the many hours of parliamentary time expended on merging the NFSA with the AFC, and before that, calling the NLA to account for its stewardship, the creation of the NFSA as a statutory authority was almost perfunctory, attracting little debate. The legislation would take effect on 1 July 2008, the same date on which the AFC would be no more.⁶²⁹

On that first day of the NFSA's life as a legal entity and independent statutory authority, staff and friends gathered in the frosty dawn for a celebratory breakfast in the courtyard. As an Aboriginal smoking ceremony got underway, the ghosts of the past were exorcised from the building created in 1930 for the Institute of Anatomy, and which had housed its collection of Aboriginal skeletal remains. So, too, the smoke

⁶²⁸ Puplick's discussions with Stone and Brandis had smoothed the way. Malcolm Turnbull also supported the proposal in Shadow Cabinet. Turnbull had been invited to the NFSA's 20th birthday party in William St, since it was in his electorate, and had not forgotten. Puplick, Pike and Edmondson, *NFSA History*.

⁶²⁹ When Senate Estimates Committee reviewed these imminent changes, there was a final brief skirmish between Senators Rod Kemp and Kate Lundy:

Senator Kemp: Screen sound, or the Film and Sound Archive, is now being divested. Very bad decision, that one, but anyway, that is happening...

Senator Lundy: We've been through some quite interesting times with them: at the merger originally of the AFC and the National Film and Sound Archive –

Senator Kemp: Which I think you supported initially, Senator Lundy, if I remember rightly.

Senator Lundy: - and of all the heated conversations and debates across this table, Senator Kemp, and now the de-merger, which of course I think is fantastic public policy.

(Senate Hansard, Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee. 29 May 2008 p ECA 109, 113)

symbolically expelled the spectres from the years of struggle to bring the NFSA into its own.

The old Institute is long gone, yet its shadowy presence remains. It is most palpable in the fabric of the building's foyer, where the sculpted faces of famous scientists still gaze down upon all who enter, and where repose the ashes of the Institute's first director, Sir Colin Mackenzie. They rest in a niche behind a memorial plaque which declares *Si monumentum requies, circumspice* (if you seek his monument, look around). To those who would take the NFSA's future for granted, it is a daily reminder that there is no such thing as an immortal institution.

It was just sort of dumped – here it is, cold and dripping on the table. Go for it! There was no marketing strategy, it was just meant to be so great it would work.

Interviewee commenting on the 1999 rebranding of the NFSA as ScreenSound Australia

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The standard list of questions sent to all interviewees is used as a template for analysing the comments. Even though the entire list did not apply to everyone, and even though all of the interviews tended to range around topics and go off at tangents, this appealed as the most logical way of ordering the material. The whole question list is at [Appendix 5](#); the questions are also at the start of each section below. All of the interviews were recorded at a place of the interviewee's choice including workplaces, cafes or private homes.

A thematic approach has been used for analysis. Verbatim extracts have been kept succinct. Where necessary they have been edited for readability or summarised in prose. Since the focus is on content rather than personality or role, and to protect confidentiality, interviewees are identified by a randomly chosen code letter only. The personal pronoun "she" is used for all interviewees. Although, for reasons of length, the extracts are very selective, no substantive comments relevant to the questions have been omitted, except where their inclusion would compromise requested confidentiality.

All interviewees had opportunity to comment on the draft text of this chapter, so they could check that they had been quoted in context. What follows is the text as circulated, modified only by the feedback comments received. No other changes have been made.

4.2 INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

4.2.1 CONTEXT OF THE FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVES IN THE NLA

Do you recall, for example, the culture and priorities of the Library, interaction with stakeholders, responses to issues affecting the film and sound archives? Can you recall direct personal experiences? Where did the driving force come from? What do you recall of relationships with other NLA personnel and areas?

Those familiar with the NLA agreed its conservatism and book-orientation was palpable. Audiovisual material was an oddity, an entertainment, not to be taken seriously. On the first research visit **L** felt almost discouraged by front of house staff from going up to the Film Division: they “had no sense it was a valuable thing”. Film-related documentation had to be stored in the main Library stacks; it was “inappropriate” for the film area to have it. **C** observed the conservative management of the Film area, where the Archive was simply an unrelated add-on to the main business of the Film Lending Collection: “it was controlled by bureaucrats who wanted a simple straightforward bureaucratic workplace and didn’t want to get involved in things they didn’t have to”. It was a home for “people who were time serving and career building in the library system, rather than supporting any really expansive work in the film archive area”. The archive activity was just sufficient “to serve a very specific need that might arise.” **C** was appalled at the “extraordinary lost opportunities there were to have recorded things properly, even on video or film in the early stages”. In her research **C** often “simply made handwritten notes because we had no equipment. The Archive in the National Library offered us no support.⁶³⁰ There was no real guiding principle for film archive work, film preservation.”

⁶³⁰ Oral history did not then have the status it has now as an historical source. Nor was the necessity of capturing the entire interview understood. Access protocols, as now observed, were then non-existent. When introduced after World War II the NLA’s oral history work was an unstaffed activity included in the Manuscripts section.

K, a film maker using the Archive as a source of footage, recalls with some sadness that the duplicates available were all 16mm, “because the Library couldn’t afford to make 35mm prints.” **C** recalls that the collection of scripts, posters, publicity material and so on was very random; “there was no philosophy, no guiding principles, no vision or long term planning”. Like others, both felt it inevitable that the film archive would have to be separated from the NLA.

K felt the film industry couldn’t take credit for this when it finally happened: in the 1960s and 1970s, with the establishment of the Film and Television School and the Australian Council for the Arts, “the Archive was left behind. Not forgotten, just not thought about because we were so preoccupied in trying to get things going, because we actually didn’t have an industry” remembers **K**. Several interviewees cited the dedicated “boffins” and “agitators” who kept things going: Peter Burgis, Ray Edmondson, Karen Foley, Ross Cooper,⁶³¹ Larry Lake, Andrew Pike - and Rod Wallace⁶³² who is remembered with particular affection. **K** adds: “I don’t think the hierarchy of the National Library understood that. Probably the bureaucracy got totally fed up with them: [they] would have thought the whole thing was a bloody nuisance.” **D** recalls that Peter and Ray “were outsiders - not part of the librarian clique. I think the National Library community resented change. Because they were acquiring material, Peter and Ray were out in that community and building up a support base. “

Nevertheless, the establishment in 1972 of the Music and Sound Recording section and the Film Archive unit suggested to **E** a measure of change: “politically there was something happening for [these] to suddenly be important to the National Library. Not important enough to be taken seriously”, but important enough to increase staff and

⁶³¹ Ross Cooper was the first to do a Bachelor of Arts honours thesis in Australian film.

⁶³² **E** remembers “He was Head of Special Collections - a lovely man. He was a great supporter of both Ray and Peter and he understood. He was one of the only ones who actually supported an audio/visual collection. He’d come and see how it was going. For what he could do, he was a supporter.” **C** adds: “I think Rod Wallace particularly worked very hard within the system trying to improve resources and build credibility for the film archival work. And Rod was a very articulate and gentle man....he was very persuasive in his arguments, but I don’t think he was someone who would take a lot of risks to push the Archive along. It really needed outside support, with which he could then work”.

change structures. **M** remembers the launch of *The Last Film Search* in 1981: “It was a fantastic project which also helped publicise the Archive itself and what it was all about.[It] helped to forge a [separate] identity for the Archive, which dealt with a different community and different technology, and that warranted it being independent.”

But the possibility of a separate identity and a split was hardly welcome news for the NLA. In the context of access restrictions and increasing criticism, **D** recalls that in 1982/83, the NLA management pre-emptively moved technical functions out of the Sound Recording Section into the Preservation and Conservation Branch. And when the break finally came “not everybody was against it, but most were... the sound section was adding a bigger and brighter oral history area. I think that’s [why] some of them were so miffed. In the Library’s mind they were doing something about audio/visual material.” But without NFSA a lot of the audiovisual heritage would have been lost. “Had they stayed with the National Library [film and sound archives would] have been subsumed” concluded **D**.

4.2.2 1984: SEPARATION FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

The separation was opposed by the NLA and its supporters but favoured by the film and sound communities. Why do you think these opposing views and public feelings emerged? Do you think they were justified? Do you think the name “National Film and Sound Archive” was appropriate? Were you comfortable with the new body and its name?

“I think the overall feeling was tremendous excitement and a sense of promise for the future” recalls **C**. If there were any regrets “they were on the part of empire builders at the National Library, but even there I think they were very glad to see film leaving – it would free up space.” **G** adds that the Sydney Filmmakers Cooperative and its journal

Filmnews “got involved in the campaign. [There were] some very vocal members who were strongly of that opinion. I never really had any other stance.” *Filmnews* also campaigned for the NFLC to transfer as part of the NFSA. “It was certainly a step forward” says **F**. “It was the goal of many of us to support it.” It was hard to work out why it had taken so long. It looked as if the NFSA would promptly achieve statutory authority status. Maybe there was too much resistance from bodies like the NLA [or the department]. **F** added: “It’s like *Yes Minister*. People don’t like giving up power...”

E liked the name. “Absolutely. ‘National’ gives it the gravitas; ‘film and sound’ is very descriptive. It should probably be “of Australia” because [it is] international and it brands the country as well.” What was the NLA’s reaction? “Very resentful. I don’t think it was ever planned that film and sound were going together but of necessity [Ray and Peter] teamed up and fought the NLA establishment, and they actually won.” **D** saw the name helping to create an identity for a new discipline. “We were developing the art and science of sound and moving image archiving: things were being invented as we went along.”

A remembered noting continuing resentments nearly a decade after the events. “The division had [clearly] been a very unpleasant affair, fought bitterly by the NLA, which [strongly] believed there had been nefarious dealings” involving information being leaked to politicians, bureaucrats behaving wrongly and inappropriate tactics being used. **A** thought battle lines and personal animosities had got entrenched: conspiracy theories persisted, and the separation was perceived as a negative judgment on the NLA. Yet, she added, had people not lobbied the politicians who drove it, it probably would not have separated and “the collection could never have had a fraction of the attention that it got later as an independent institution”. **A** thought the library community seemed to believe that separation was unnecessary, and in an institution lacking a solid legal base the collection would be vulnerable. “To some degree history proved them right”.

4.2.3 THE POST-1984 NFSA

From 1984 onwards, how successful was the NFSA in establishing and projecting its identity and purpose? For example, was it clearly differentiated from other collecting institutions? Was its identity or name confused with other bodies? Was the lack of a legal personality and enabling legislation a problem? Was there community awareness both inside and outside Canberra? Was the NFSA's Advisory Council effective? Was the NFSA hampered by its relationship with the portfolio department?

D remembers there was a kind of “birthing and branding” process when the sound and film activities moved into their own building, the former Institute of Anatomy, in 1984. “If there’s too much controversy, and stakeholders are arguing about who the place is and what it does, it’s not politically that positive”. The institution’s name only mentioned “film” and “sound” but there was a “Film and Television Division and a Sound and Radio Division” in the structure and “that sort of kept people happy.” Yet, as happens all over the world, there’s a tendency for “sound [people] to feel overshadowed by film [people]”... and for “video [people] to feel overshadowed by film [people]; and film sound was a bit of an orphan”. There were silos and specialisations because the skills and equipment are different. And there were separate collection storage areas at Mitchell.

From **K**’s point of view, the NFSA should have been more honest with itself about sound: “it was badly neglected and was the sort of second or third rung of what those at the Archive, including Ray Edmondson, thought it should be”. Everything was focussed on the image, which was easy, but sound was vitally important. Even now there was bitterness amongst sound people, and a move for a separate sound archive. “That would be a tragedy, [but I can] see why it’s happened.” **E** agreed the tension is still there, remembering that it was “never a particularly good marriage” because the proponents originally wanted separate film and sound archives. “Government obviously said: can’t

afford that. If you want to go you do it together.” Consequently “it’s very hard. Film is very sexy, sound is everyday.”

After the first few years the NFSA moved to a functional structure, bringing together areas like cataloguing, access and storage management, and merging separate data bases.⁶³³ **D** recalls “it was evolutionary, more mixing and cross-fertilisation, but it took time”. **E** thought the initial film/sound structure was probably a mistake and it persisted too long. Once the NFSA became format-based you could acquire more: “you looked at the content, rather than [collecting] the format for the sake of it”.

As NFSA grew, it spread into temporary buildings adjacent to its HQ, recruiting up to one hundred staff on temporary contracts. “It was a funny kind of environment culturally”, recalls **D**, “people who’d work in a demountable with twelve others [would] kind of have their own little identity.” Despite the conditions “It was just wonderful” said **N**. “working on the nitrate collection...it was basic identification work, handling something so old and so beautiful, and there’s a huge upside when you come across something unusual.” The NFSA attracted creative people, and they initiated activities: “wonderful Christmas parties, great music, amazing dancing...” Though extra resources to hire temporary staff had come in a time of crisis, continued **N**, “there was a sense of embattlement. The people low down would battle against people like Ray, [with] this sense of just hanging in there: it’s terrible but we loved it....the camaraderie of those workers, rolling on with our small ambition.”

Projection of the NFSA’s identity was slow to gain momentum. **C** recalls “NFSA had a lot of internal housekeeping to do to sort out its principles, practices and protocols....it was very inward looking, slow developing its public programs.” That remains a problem today: “It is not good at public relations... at telling the world about its work.” **M** concurs,

⁶³³ The common data base was known as AIMS (Audiovisual Information Management System), later MAVIS (Merged Audiovisual Information System). It was an inventory system with a cataloguing overlay. It was ultimately successfully marketed to other audiovisual archives overseas.

and adds that while the Archive was servicing a need of the production community, “the engagement between the two probably wasn’t as good as it could have been.” According to **K** it still isn’t. And in the early years “you could never get anyone to return a [phone] call.... the management wasn’t as businesslike and commercially oriented as it should have been. Any museum or national gallery has got to be oriented to the commercial world.... the Archive was sadly lacking in that direction.”

E remembers that it was all “a struggle”. It took many years. “[NFSA] had a profile within a small community. It was in this tiny little place. Not many people knew about it.” Being outside the Parliamentary Triangle it was hard to establish NFSA as a bona fide institution. Getting tourists in was a challenge. “But over time it changed. There was a lot of hard work.” Exhibitions were prepared economically, the appeal was broad and word of mouth helped. A profile gradually built. **A** recalls “there wasn’t any real trauma about getting it known in the inner circle”. The real challenge was to connect more broadly. “There’s a real gap between the significance of the collections and their centrality to Australians’ experience of their culture, and how much Australians know at all of [NFSA’s] existence. Very few would know of it” – even though NFSA is now larger than some better known institutions.

E recalls that in the beginning there was frequent confusion with National Archives of Australia⁶³⁴: “There’s always been a tension. We’ve been called the National Sound and Film Archive. It’s a hard word; it doesn’t roll off the tongue.” **A** adds that NAA was a more prominent institution and this was a practical problem because it confused potential donors. It was and is an issue, “but not an issue that should be perceived out of proportion to [NFSA’s] successes”. **D** remembers that the situation in the early years wasn’t helped by NAA complaining about the “inappropriate terminology” in the name: i.e. it should be *archives* (plural), not *archive* (singular).

⁶³⁴ At the time it was called Australian Archives. The name changed to National Archives of Australia in 1999. It preserves the audiovisual records of government [however defined, and including ABC and SBS programs] and the division of responsibility with the NFSA has never been a simple matter.

Early hopes for legislation to make NFSA a statutory authority, as recommended in *Time in our hands* in 1985, came to nought. **F** remembers that “the report was fantastic” and that Barry Cohen had the timing, opportunity and reasoning – he thought Keating would have established NFSA as a statutory authority under *Creative Nation*. “I don’t know enough about why [Cohen] didn’t do it, but an opportunity was lost ... and it took another 15 or 25 years.” **A** was aware of a Departmental push to get legislation through at a later date, but it foundered through interdepartmental game-playing over sales tax. Yet in some ways “the relationship with the portfolio department was a strength (until the AFC merger)”. It was financially advantageous for the building extension, and “the place functioned, it acted independently”. Yet its name was not protected and “it gave the institution a justified insecurity.”

4.2.4 THE REBRANDING AND ITS PRELUDE ⁶³⁵

Recall the launch of the “ScreenSound” brand in June 1999. What were you doing then? Were you present at the launch? What’s your memory of what happened, how people reacted and how you felt about it? What’s your recollection of the branding consultants, Keystone Corporate Positioning, and the role they played? Were you involved in any of their interviews or focus groups?

⁶³⁵ When reviewing this chapter in draft, one interviewee expressed concern that some commentary and criticism of Keystone Corporate Positioning and Taylor Nelson Sofres (with whom Keystone worked in partnership) was undeservedly negative. The view was put that Keystone’s methodology was of good quality and Taylor Nelson Sofres is a globally-respected, international market research company.

THE PROBLEM

As **Q** remembered, there were three markets in which identity and awareness had to grow: the public (including money to expand programs and, in turn, bring in the fee-paying public), the government (competition with other cultural institutions for funding – and without legislation the Archive was in a weak position) and the audiovisual industries, to which the Archive had to be relevant, especially since there was no legal deposit requirement. The rebranding exercise addressed perceptions about the low profile of the institution, the confusion between NFSA and NAA, and the associations triggered by the word “archive”.

L, E, M, Q, X and **A** all had views about the word ‘archive’ at the time: most associated the adjectives “musty, dusty” with it, and saw it as a limiting term. It suggested “old, closed” not “open, engaging” like the audiovisual industries which were exciting and contemporary. It also triggered other associations:

- The industry shared the ‘must, dusty’ image; but it also either considered the Archive irrelevant or didn’t trust it with their material (**L, E**)
- It belonged to the pre-digital generation (**M**)
- It did not appeal to children, and although other parts of the community were more positive, most adults didn’t want to engage with an ‘archive’. (**X**)
- It suggested the last scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* – [a vast warehouse of inaccessible crates and boxes] - as the public perception of an archive, an image that it was best not to reinforce (**Q**)
- “National Film and Sound Archive” was not a good name in the 1990s – it was thought if you removed the word ‘archive’ you would sex it up a bit” (**E**)
- But it wasn’t all negative. The “museum, old imagery” was an asset, a “lovely resonance of stacks of things”. And now ⁶³⁶ it has digital associations “and is a flexible, nuanced term.” (**N**)

⁶³⁶ That is, at the time the interview was recorded

This led on to the question of confusion with NAA. **A** was “fully aware of it” and **X** recalls “it created problems with both positioning and brand confusion. People who defined themselves as archivists wanted to continue to work for an archive.”

The low profile was felt, in part, to be an attitudinal issue. “Some people wanted to stay internally focussed, some externally focussed. It was like going into this amazing kind of monastic environment where there’s fantastic levels of expertise – [but] you got the sense people didn’t realise the material was actually the property of the people of Australia. So it’s like ‘we’re happy for people to come in on our terms’.” (**X**) Externally, there was “a concern of many in the industry about finding [the Archive], its lack of prominence” (**A**). And there was a political imperative: “there was definitely a sense that the National Film and Sound Archive had to have a stronger profile, to prove it could be a bigger player” (**Q**) and overcome concern in the Department that it was not getting the same prominence as other institutions. Market research showed that recognition of the name “National Film and Sound Archive” was extremely low: the place had “low appeal, low awareness, historic orientation, hesitation”. (**A, X**).

M remembers this as a major issue. “Some (like Ray) were passionate about leaving things as they were, others very passionate about changing the name and identity”. The Archive didn’t have the profile it deserved, and ‘film’ was an anachronistic term: television used tape or digital materials. A new name was needed to better express what the Archive did and communicate with a younger audience. (After the event, **M** “was comfortable with the new name and supported it.”)

D thought the main reasons for change were to have (a) a short, catchy name “like Telstra” (b) to have “Australia” embedded in the name, although “National Film and Sound Archive of Australia” was getting bit long – and “national” had been hijacked by state bodies like the National Gallery of Victoria (c) and whether “screen” would be better than “film”. Added **D**: “We didn’t have a three letter acronym – like NLA, NAA,

ANG, NMA – although you could stand up and say I’m Joe Bloggs from the NFSA and people knew who it was. Amongst industry circles it was working quite OK.”

“The in-group are the most important people in communicating and positioning an organisation externally” remembered Q. “There’s nothing wrong with the name National Film and Sound Archive. It’s noble, it explains the organisation. But no one used it – they referred to the NFSA. [That] won’t resonate with anyone other than those who already know what you’re meaning.” And A recalled concern among constituents and stakeholder groups to be clearer about the Archive’s identity and market it better.

THE PROCESS

The consultants, Keystone, conducted a research process from March to May 1999. It included staff consultations and, with stakeholders, a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

X recalls the timeframe was set by the Prime Ministerial launch, but “it wasn’t particularly rushed. It was done efficiently.” Yet Q thought “the entire process was very rushed. There was an expressed political imperative to move quickly and get things launched as quickly as possible. A sense, certainly from the Director, that we’d been waiting a long time for this.”

“I don’t believe there was any survey of the public or within staff as to whether [branding or positioning should be reviewed]” remembers Q. “I thought there would be some market research done, as part of the process.” Perhaps that’s why it all came as a surprise to D. “The process was hard to discern. There were meetings and focus groups. [Keystone] kept digging up this idea that, as well as [the name] being too long and

needing to be explained, the word ‘archive’ was old fashioned, out of date.” It conjured up dusty shelves and wouldn’t appeal to younger audiences. “I can’t recall any proper market research brought in to justify that argument.” A few years later, different consultants said “the word ‘archive’ was good because it had gravitas”. **D** wondered “whether it was all preconceived. The debate never started at the beginning: do we want a lighter, frothier name in the first place? Are people having problems with NFSA? It was just assumed this had to be done.”

E attended the staff consultations: “There were numerous consultations, numerous focus groups. I remember staff were coming in and out of the forums because I was part of it, and there were times when I thought that was a waste of my hour. I think the brief they were given may have confused them. We were asked to come up with some names and suggestions. ScreenSound came up as one of the better names.”

X recalls an agreed strategy to move away from “archive” to something more evocative. A broad range of names was tested and narrowed down: “ScreenSound tested most positively in research across the broadest range of people...and the positioning line, ‘The National Collection of Screen and Sound’, provided clarity. People didn’t know what [the institution] did – they thought it was part of the National Archives”. “ScreenSound Australia’ was there for a long time” adds **J**. “Initially [it seemed] too obvious and easy. But it was the 1990s, when every government agency was rebranding and calling themselves ‘something Australia’. The consultants proposed a couple of names that were more flamboyant and creative [but perhaps it was felt] the minister would not approve.”

The process engendered tensions. There is a basic truism, as **X** explained: “in any major change process, fifteen percent of people are with you. The real challenge is to bring the bulk of people in the middle along. Fifteen percent at the far end you will never get on board, usually for sincere reasons”. **Q** remembers “there were difficulties in the

management of the organisation. Not everyone on the executive had an equal voice. There was division between an old guard and a new guard” while **X** adds “staff were not involved to a highly detailed extent. It was stretching [management] in the direction they said they wanted to go, but it wasn’t an extreme change – a reflection of the extreme conservatism of some of the forces within [the Archive].”

A factor which limited staff focus on the consultations was the relocation, at the same time, of the majority of staff from temporary accommodation into the new extension. “The rebranding was a surprise because the big focus was on the new building: we took occupancy just before the launch”, recalls **N**. She remembers discussion with colleagues: “We might address perceived local problems with the name, but we’d also lose this international reputation and recognition of the name. We had a fantastic reputation and it seemed silly not to take that seriously.” **N** “saw it as a shift in power away from preservation to access. The rebranding seemed to happen quickly, and staff discussion tended to be mostly at the top. I remember emails and staff suggestions for the name, but I dislike that sort of thing: I think they’re just lying to us because they’ve made up their minds. It will be top down.”

CONSULTANTS

The NLA and NFSA have engaged many consultants over the years. There are views of consultants in general, and here, of Keystone in particular:

D reflects “we’ve had a long procession of consultants. They are often not experts in archiving, but in marketing and public relations. We’ve had consultants with expertise in management, which was disturbing. Not the worst we’ve had, but they certainly did the job on the place nonetheless.” In the early days in the NLA and NFSA “we had managers who weren’t first and foremost trained in management – but library studies and technical fields.”

“Keystone – we used to call them Keystone Kops – were very shmick” remembers **E**. “They were given a brief. I think they did what they thought they were supposed to be doing. We’re quite a cumbersome beast and I think we were a bit daunting for them. They followed their textbook corporate branding principles which didn’t necessarily apply to us. There were a lot of things that I think they basically didn’t get. We were well known in certain parts but we wanted to expand our audience and I think that challenged them considerably. We actually had to grow and develop; we also needed to be authentic, and we were iconic as well”.

Were Keystone clear about what the Archive management wanted them to do? **D** concluded “the management were as clear about what they wanted, their hopes for a higher profile, as they were capable of being”. But they weren’t clear internally about what that would actually involve, and there were “unfortunate internal project management challenges. The more an organisation has a project team involved, the more diversity of opinion.”

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

F gave a one-on-one interview to a TNS representative⁶³⁷. “The view was put strongly [to me] that the word ‘archive’ was felt to be old fashioned, with dusty-back-room connotations. I assumed [there was a desire] to achieve a more modern look and overcome some resistance by changing the name, getting a snappier, jazzier more modern feel. I couldn’t think of any alternative word to ‘archive’. I was asked: how would you feel about ‘ScreenSound Australia’? I sort of went along with it – I was neither hooked nor opposed.... I didn’t think a great deal more about it, except I knew people who even at that time were opposed to it. I thought – you’ve got to give this place

⁶³⁷

Taylor Nelson Sofres. Date and place of interview and name of interviewer advised.

a shake. We hadn't [yet] achieved statutory standing for the Archive. Maybe [this] can achieve that."

C attended a TNS focus group and found it "extraordinarily dull." The person running it "was so ill-informed that discussion was absolutely meaningless.... so theoretical, vague and non-specific to the Archive. I had nothing to contribute and spent most of my time sitting silently: I felt there's nothing here I can come to grips with."

L attended a different TNS focus group which lasted "a couple of hours". The group was shown a display about the Archive, and was asked what its functions were. They responded "well, that doesn't tell you. All that's wrong". **L** went on: "they knew what they wanted the focus group to say and did their damndest to make us say it. We never did. We couldn't accept their first premises [so] we couldn't accept any of the rest.... they argued and nagged and tried to persuade and found us completely intransigent.... they had an agenda they wanted us to say yes to, and we didn't". The organisers were clearly unhappy: "we hadn't given them the right answers [although] I wasn't sure what the right answers would have been."

THE LAUNCH

"About an hour" before the launch, the new name and logo were revealed to staff, as **D** recalls: "We were scratching our heads [over them]... and for all the effort that went into the launch, there was nothing to say how [they were arrived at]. It was just sort of dumped – here it is, cold and dripping on the table: go for it! There was no marketing strategy, it was just meant to be so great it would work."

E remembers “the launch was the announcement. Everybody was oohing and ahing and it was an exciting new phase in the National Film and Sound Archive - and that’s about it. Keystone produced a video and it was funky. We were trying to get ourselves out of this old fuddy duddy, you’re an archive and you should stick to what you’re doing and collect material and never come out of your shell.” **X** adds “I was there. [It was] highly successful. Five hundred people, John Howard, the video was fantastic – captured the essence of the brand. A great night, particularly successful way of showcasing the organisation’s capability.”

C didn’t agree: “I was there and appalled at the cost of it. I remember the musical entertainment and big screen flashy visual presentations, which just seemed over-inflated and totally inappropriate for a service organisation....more like a film industry marketing exercise than...appropriate to a dignified professional service organisation.”

D compared it to the 1984 official opening by Bob Hawke: “the initial branding and birthing process: [there was] a six month build up to the big launch [with] the celebrities and dancing girls and vintage cars and the whole lot”.

4.2.5 AFTER THE REBRANDING: REACTIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Why do you think the name change happened? What was the rationale? What were the risks and how were they handled? Did you think the two-tier logic (marketing name “ScreenSound Australia”, formal name “National Collection of Screen and Sound”) worked? Why do you think the word “archive” was dropped in 1999 – then later restored? Was “ScreenSound Australia” better than “National Film and Sound Archive” for public profile and/or professional purposes? Have your views changed over time? What expectations did the renaming raise for you? Were they all fulfilled? Did the name change affect you – if so,

how did you respond? What do you recall of public and private reactions – for instance, in the media, among colleagues, supporters and users of the Archive?

STAKEHOLDER REACTIONS

While reactions in the Department and the Ministry to the rebranding were neutral (A) they were otherwise, for the most part, negative. “Laughable” said C. “Typical of a Canberra-centric idea” thought K, although X remembers “We had very positive reactions from people who weren’t from Canberra.”

L just didn’t see the point: “it seemed totally unnecessary. It didn’t encapsulate what [the institution] did any more. Inappropriate – a big mistake.” The reaction spread, as F recalls: “It was just a nightmare. It didn’t really work. Opposition was much more widespread and grew after the decision more than I certainly imagined.”

There was incredulity. “I couldn’t believe it. It was the most ridiculous thing I’d ever heard. I was absolutely outraged. Practically everyone I knew was as outraged as I was” said G. “It hadn’t been thought out at all. What’s wrong with National Film and Sound Archive? You know what it is” added K. “The rationale was very obscure. It was a big surprise. [What was the launch] was going to be for – a new project or program? – nobody had any idea it was going to be *that!*” said G.

Then there was the cost. “All the money spent on the rebranding could have been spent on other things the Archive needed” recalled L. “The publicity campaign, the time and energy, the arguing, the arguments that followed again – what a dreadful waste of money and time”.

And the practical implications. **N** remembers “the new name was terrible. We were crushed. It was like an assault on our identity and our eminence. Other areas embraced the change, and we were interested in discussion, but we had a lot to lose.” **E** concurred: “[the change] worked for part of the organisation but not probably the majority of it. Some staff were supportive, others were not. Everybody just got on with it. The name changed, it was inconvenient, some disagreed with it, let’s get on and see if it works.”

Were there unspoken motives? “I’m very cynical about these squashed non-words that are meant to be descriptive” thought **N**. “They degrade the language. They’re meant to look good on a poster - or why have a capital letter in the middle? I wondered about a conspiracy theory – maybe the rebranding was someone saying ‘it’s not my fault. It’s actually because it’s a stinky old institution and we have to make it look better’”.

The vital word ‘archive’ was missing. **G** considered “Having ‘archive’ in the title is actually important [because of the international relations.]” And it mattered as a reassurance to donors: “ScreenSound didn’t have the gravitas of National Film and Sound Archive” recalls **E**. If you were giving away your precious family movies “you’d want to give [them] to a solid sounding organisation with the word ‘archive’ in it.” **K** was shocked: “I nearly had a stroke. It destroyed identity and, to a certain point, credibility. It wasn’t popular. It wasn’t a wise move because it didn’t sound like a museum or collecting agency.”

In the industry, not everyone was negative. “There was no debate about it in the broader production community I mixed with. I don’t recall any people at all coming to me expressing the idea [that] it was a disaster”, remembers **M**. “They got used to it. After three or four years people were freely using the term ‘ScreenSound’. On the other hand, **K** recalls “there was strong opposition from the industry. Everyone thought it was stupid – [it sounded like] a sound recording studio. It confused people.”

Again, **X** had good feedback. “We certainly got a very strong community reaction when people saw it, or heard about it.” But **D**’s assessment was that “the only people who really saw a lot in the name ‘ScreenSound’ were other marketing consultants: our primary clients⁶³⁸ didn’t warm to [it]. We had to spend twice as long explaining that ScreenSound was the NFSA.... at conferences I would get blank looks.”

THE MOVE TO FOX

C recalls “I thought the name was a joke, but what [really concerned me] was the relocation of [NFSA’s] Sydney office into the Fox Studio precinct. This was a disaster for its identity. It aligned the Archive with the big business end of town; it was a real insult to the independents.” The Australian film industry was always one of “mavericks and independents and rogue operators”: so putting the film heritage into Fox “was a slap in the face, totally inappropriate. That’s when the ScreenSound brand and the way it was launched really started to have a bad smell.....”

Conversely, **A** remembers “people in Sydney were more concerned about the move to Fox than the ScreenSound change. [Those] most fiercely opposed to the name change were still fiercely supportive of the Archive. Some people who never heard of [it] started to hear about [it] because the name stuck”.

THE LOGO

The new logo - a piece of film curled into a cone shape, surmounting an oval representing a disc record - got mixed reactions. **Q** loved the logo. “It’s a symbol you can create meaning behind: it was a way of showing what the organisation did in a modern

⁶³⁸ That is, in radio, television, film and the record industries

graphical form.” **D** didn’t like it: “it was some visual attempt to bring together film and sound...even the animated version didn’t capture all the things that really summed up the place. There was nothing to say how we arrived at it or what it simulated – it was just meant to be so great that it would work.” It replaced NFSA’s fifteen year old kookaburra logo which **D** preferred: “[the kookaburra] symbolised a whole bunch of things that tied these different media together, without being too explicit or descriptive. [The logo] was fixed, even though it wasn’t broken. [Later, in 2003 there was] a short period where the more talented staff were drawing cartoons with lyrebirds (the AFC logo) attacking kookaburras.” **K** adds “they should reinstate the kookaburra logo”.

CONSEQUENCES

Practicalities: Products had to be rebranded, signage changed. “It did take a while”, recalls **E**. “People used to say, no, you’re at the National Film and Sound Archive – no, no, it’s ScreenSound. We had to educate people, but like anything after ten years people got used to ScreenSound Australia. If nothing else, it rolls off the tongue. You may not like it. It didn’t suit us, but it’s certainly easier to say”.

Follow up: **X** was mindful that the change needed to be evaluated in due course. “It is always [desirable] to do [some] research probably twelve months afterwards”.

No permanent damage: **A** contends: “It didn’t do any fundamental damage to the Archive. It was a distraction, but it wasn’t as though [the Archive] lost support, or lost constituency, or people wouldn’t give [it] things. It would have been better [to avoid] the distraction, and particularly at that critical time when the AFC took over.” Likewise **F**: “It was a hiccup along the road and the hiccup didn’t work. It was worth having a crack because it could have worked had they done the process correctly. [You have to] refresh the organisation every so often.” And **A** again: “Some [people] were very

supportive, some fiercely opposed, some very upset by the name, some really thrilled with it. The dynamic was very complex. It didn't cause deep rifts. There was a lot more support for a change than there was for the name 'ScreenSound'".

... but ominous consequences: D had wider concerns: "The [rebranding period] certainly caused some angst; ironically, it [started] a succession of events which led to the AFC takeover. We learnt [in hindsight] that if you're a small cultural agency it doesn't help to have too much bad press." You just get on quietly with your work: controversy, "and stakeholders arguing about who the place is and what it does", are not politically positive. "We tried to make it work for a period but it was overtaken by events." The angst over the name "was an order of magnitude less stressful than the AFC takeover – that was a total disaster."

The 'archive' word: A thought that "dropping the word 'archive' was clearly an issue. But people who knew it was an archive, knew it was an archive. The branding was more about the other people". N thought the loss was a mistake: "I see the 'archive' word skimming past and drawing in modernity: capturing, being what language does well."

Credibility and balance: Q considered "the change was as balanced as an organisation was going to get. It still had credibility in its sounding, both within the National Collection of Screen and Sound and the ScreenSound Australia still sounding important. It's an Australian institution and it's tops in terms of screen and sound. Everyday language: there are screens in cinema, on television, computers, iPods, phones. It was a deliberate choice to move away from a specific medium of collecting to a way in which the public interact with those mediums."

VIEWS IN HINDSIGHT

Be gradual: A says “launching the name as a major event to surprise the world was unwise. It would have been better to float some names, get reactions. Do it like KFC⁶³⁹. Australian Archives moving to National Archives was more subtle. CSIRO are known by their acronym.” N concurs: “A proper consultation takes time. It was expedient for the publicity of the event; it was tied into another process altogether when it should not have been. It was unseemly. I don’t know if they talked to people overseas: I remember confusion of overseas clients with the new name. For a name we assume is trying to capture modernity, how quickly it becomes old fashioned too.” E adds: “The name change could have been slowed down, rather than going from one to the other...you gradually rebrand so people get used to it. You’ve got to bring people with you and you won’t get everyone, but you’ll get more”.

Culture change: “Cultural institutions are challenging” said X. “If you want to change a position you need to change the culture. Consultants have a use-by date. There needs to be an internal champion with continuity and seniority who will carry [the change] forward. [In this case]I’m not sure how much commitment to change there was. Interestingly the name change lasted five years, which is extraordinary.” X adds: “What should have run in parallel, in hindsight, was a cultural change program.... rallying people behind the rationale wasn’t dealt with as comprehensively [as it should have been].”

The time it takes: “Having worked for other organisations” said D, “they probably haven’t spent as much time and energy fixating on the name – agencies with a strong sense of purpose within larger [bodies] tend to get on with it and not worry too much.” A adds “[it would have been better not to change]. But the change wasn’t the disaster it’s painted to be. I don’t know the change back was the major or significant event in its

⁶³⁹ Kentucky Fried Chicken gradually shifted to its acronym in order to drop the word “fried” in a more health-conscious sales environment.

history. [Sadly] people started worrying about that rather than the real issue, the AFC takeover – took their eye off the main game. It was a distraction when energy should have been somewhere else.”

On consultants: “Steer clear of consultants – they were a hindrance, they didn’t get it. They were not in tune with the nature of the organisation” comments **A**. “Keystone were a disaster. They had a strong barrow to push.” A different consultant might have produced a successful outcome. “Keystone were heavily opposed to acronyms. Bad advice. One lesson is to get a clear idea of where you’re going before you get consultants and get them to help you with the how, not the what. They bought heavily into the what.”

...and consultation: **Q** noted that “not everyone took the new name on board. But that never happens. The more people engage with the process, the more accepting they are of the outcome, whether they agree with it or not. For the Archive there was no universal agreement that the name or logo should change.”

Can you go back? **Q** considers “If there was reason to act quickly – if the Department wasn’t happy with the controversy – then the clear cut way would be to go back to what had been before. It could be a deliberate choice that this was the best name for the organisation, or it could be a cop out without having to think about the issues. It would be great for the National Film and Sound Archive to create a positive meaning around the word ‘Archive’ – to change what people think. It’s easier to go back than create something new.” **A** remembers “The name was never ScreenSound. It was actually National Screen and Sound Archive, also to be known as ScreenSound. That got heavily lost. Opponents of the change decided they needed to go back to National Film and Sound Archive and worked against using the name National Screen and Sound Archive, something we had intended to use as a prime branding item. In the end it had less impact on the Archive than most people would claim.”

FRIENDS OF THE NFSA

C recalls the origins of the Friends Association in 2000. “[It was] a lobby group to tell the Archive they were on the wrong track and needed to pull their heads in and get sorted. [There were] a raft of famous industry people [as] patrons, so the Friends always sounded much more important than it really was.... [there was] publicity and radio interviews [going on Philip Adams *Late Night Live*]. Adams began by saying he’s always worried when something is called ‘Friends of’ because it is usually a euphemism for ‘enemy of’ - he expressed it well, because [the Friends] were pretty much in confrontation....”

“The Friends published a position paper [on what it felt] the Archive should be about – important as a public statement of vision coming from outside the Archive. It was widely circulated. [It] was much influenced by the Friends of the National Museum, in the years before it was open to the public. [Like them the Friends of NFSA] felt justified in being at odds with the institution: friends of an ideal, of what the institution should be.”

NAME DUPLICATION: SCREENSOUND PTY LTD

It transpired that the ScreenSound name had other users. D remembers “a company called ScreenSound [and] a Screen Sound Guild in North Sydney [for people] who actually work on sound tracks; that was another minor source of confusion. I don’t think that was the worst of it by any means, but I don’t know if a search was made for pre-existing names.” M recalls “there was a small sound post-production facility that went by the name Screensound. But it was such a tiny operation that it had really no bearing on it”. X understood that “intellectual property lawyers cleared all potential brand names.”

The post-production company Screensound Pty Ltd⁶⁴⁰ began receiving the Archive's emails and invoices, and even collection material⁶⁴¹ intended for the Archive. **H** explained: "there were thousands of emails: even people within [the Archive] would log on to their professional forums and subscriptions and put screensound.com.au. It went on for two and a half years – complaints were never attended to". The problem apparently consumed [countless] hours, phoning and redirecting emails, with a negative impact on the company's image. From having a very positive start in the first six months, progress for Screensound Pty Ltd became increasingly difficult.

H understood that the company considered taking legal action but decided it would have been too costly and might have impacted on the business. "It's an interesting reflection on Australian bureaucracy, not necessarily specific to [the Archive], but a very accurate reflection of most government departments. Bureaucracy is there to support itself, not you." If you observe how complaints are handled by Departments and Ministers, you become "justifiably cynical".

ADVISORY COUNCIL

C recalls being present at the Archive's Advisory Council following the name change. "It was actually attended by the Minister (McGauran). I raised the question of the name and that it should be opened up for discussion again and for public comment. I was very firmly told by the chair that the subject was closed so I was very firmly put back in my box.

⁶⁴⁰ The company was registered in December 1998. Its web address was www.screensound.com.au ; the Archive's new web address was www.screensound.gov.au

⁶⁴¹ Master tape of the Queen's visit to Fiji in 1956.

“I was really impressed by the work of the Indigenous consultative panel...evolving a policy for indigenous materials [in the collection]. It was a model of its kind and got a lot of support from the Indigenous community. But it was clear the Archive lacked a grand vision, seriously underestimating its real value and understating its value to the world, and that’s been a perennial problem. [There was] resistance over issues relating to the broad context: what should the Archive’s aspirations be, [including] the collection – just Australian, or should it embrace international material?”

COLLECTION DELETIONS

C continues: “I [questioned] the ‘ethnic cleansing’ [of the collection], and got into trouble for using that term. Among other things, I objected strongly to the continuation of the sale of the vinyl collection.

“This term, which I wouldn’t use publicly, [was nevertheless] used by several people outside the Archive [to characterise] the policy of disposal of non-Australian material.⁶⁴² Much of this happened under the ScreenSound regime,” adds **C**. “It held a couple of sales to dispose of overseas publications, particularly serials, and vinyl discs. I spent a lot of money to save them for the Archive for the future and other people were doing the same. [From conversations at the sales] I learned that many of the recordings had been donated by country radio stations who would be horrified that their collections were being disposed of. There was much ill feeling.”

C complained and got the sale of vinyl suspended while an independent consultant could advise on whether the remainder should be retained. “I met with him and it was a shocker. It was clear he had decided in advance that there was no point in holding vinyl.

⁶⁴² This included prints of foreign language feature films, and non-Australian promotional materials, books and serials. In addition there were perhaps hundreds of thousands of vinyl discs – LPs and other sizes.

Everything would sooner or later be available digitally; vinyl was unwieldy, unworkable, expensive and redundant. Could I argue otherwise? I got quite angry. I only succeeded in delaying [disposal] by six months and it's a huge loss."

"I think [the deletions] rocked peoples' confidence in the Archive as a long term repository of cultural artefacts" concludes C. "Am I safe in giving my collection back to the Archive? But [such] policies can be [easily] introduced and put into effect without real public awareness or consultation."

EXECUTIVE AGENCY

One respondent recalls that the Archive's move towards Executive (later called "prescribed") agency status was stopped for technical reasons. "National Archives of Australia was the first such agency but because of legal problems the process for others was suspended by the Department of Finance. When the concept was revived, the Archive was on a new path. DCITA took a more assertive role...and started buying into the Archive's affairs. Since the "prescribed agency" [option] was closed for the moment, the Department preferred to roll the Archive into another statutory authority [via the Review of Cultural Institutions]. The NLA and the AFC were proposed."

4.2.6 MERGER WITH THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION

*What was your reaction to the merger of the Archive with the AFC in 2003? Why do you think it happened? Why did the AFC ultimately restore the name "National Film and Sound Archive"? What was the reaction? As the merger unfolded in 2003 and 2004, how did you evaluate it? Was it a good idea? Why or why not? What did you see as the **specific** consequences for the Archive's autonomy and identity?*

THE REVIEW AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT: CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

The Minister, Rod Kemp, phoned **K** and said: “ ‘We’re going to put the NFSA with the AFC’. I said ‘Is that a good idea?’ He said ‘we don’t know yet. We’ve got to do something and we think this is the best thing to do.’ It turned out to be an unmitigated disaster”, said **K**. “The mistakes were dreadful.”

C recalls being initially supportive of the proposed merger with the AFC. “I thought it would get rid of the conservatism imposed by the Department, that the Archive might now be more entrepreneurial, and that it was the closest realistic approach to statutory authority status. Kim Dalton seemed progressive, straight talking, forceful in a productive way –he’d fix the problems, get a vision going, [get rid of] the excessive bureaucratisation.”

AMENDING THE AFC ACT

C remembers discussions with this author and the Greens to facilitate passage of the amendment to the AFC Act. “The Greens had concerns about the legislation that [we] didn’t have at that point. In a phone hookup in Michael Organ’s office, Kim Dalton was eloquent, making commitments that mollified the Greens’ concerns.”

INITIAL CONSULTATIONS

Following their takeover of the NFSA in July 2003, the AFC announced a period of stakeholder consultation, coordinated by a policy staffer, Sabina Wynn.

C remembers a particular meeting over lunch. “I was pouring forth all my ideas about what the Archive should be, how it should function, its problems and how they should be fixed. She was making handwritten notes: I got worried that [my] most important points, particularly about public programs, were not noted, whereas [on] other things she was writing prolific, extended notes.” C sensed a problem: “either she’s not getting it or she has another agenda.”

“DIRECTIONS” AND THE RESPONSE

On the morning of 12 December 2003, the AFC released its *Review of programs – Stage Two Directions Paper* (hereinafter called *Directions*). The same afternoon the Canberra Times had phoned C to seek her opinion on the announced changes, including the sacking of senior staff: “I expressed myself very forcefully about the loss of corporate memory and [how] these people were the lifeblood of the institution, and I was quoted the next morning.⁶⁴³ Around 10.30 I had a phone call from Kim Dalton attacking me [about talking to the press before consulting him]”⁶⁴⁴ Over the next few months she spent a lot of time [broadcasting] emails, including internationally through the AMIA listserv, criticising *Directions* and “trying to make some sense of the situation.” C found she was beginning to say that the AFC relationship was doomed, the Archive will have to become independent, it will get worse before it gets better. “It was clear that [all significant] public programs [would] be taken over by the AFC, particularly Sabina Wynn’s little empire, and I argued that such an archive is a warehouse with no future.”

⁶⁴³ Canberra Times 13 December 2003

⁶⁴⁴ A fuller account: “He actually said ‘How dare you speak to the press without consulting [him. He said] that what I’d said was incorrect and ‘was a lie and was malicious’.... I said back ‘Kim, I did not know that I had any relationship with you that required me to report to you before I speak to the media. I’m sorry.’ From that point on we have never had a good relationship at all, not even a cordial polite relationship. Kim really crossed the line with that phone call, very inappropriate and damaging on his side.”

C also argued that the AFC was a temporary organisation [while] an archive is meant to be permanent, [with] the security of its own legislation. “I think the AFC was trying to [integrate] the Archive so it could not be easily removed – giving the AFC permanency, stability and security in an unstable funding environment. There were already questions circulating like ‘what does the AFC do as an expensive development body? It could easily be done by the FFC....’ Many emails went out under the name of the Friends of the NFSA.⁶⁴⁵ “The AFC responded through the listservs and their responses were just laughable: likewise they responded to [letters to the editor] – always farcical”.

“I wrote to Kim Dalton saying ‘why did you drop the ball?’ and accusing him of the biggest mistake he’d made of his professional career, and how bad it’s going to be for the Archive to be part of the AFC,” remembers K. “At 7.30 am [Dalton] was on the phone...I said ‘your actions are so insensitive; you’ve done a lot of damage...’ I don’t think [he] still talks to me. The mistake they made was just dreadful.”

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION FORUMS

C remembers: “the Canberra forum took place in the most extraordinary fashion, one of the worst run functions I’ve ever attended.... foredoomed to have a bad outcome for the AFC. Dalton and his colleagues all sat with their backs to the audience. They had a single facilitator who [seemed] to know nothing about the subject and had no qualifications for being there – I felt sorry for him. [It] was run with an iron hand. All discussion went through the facilitator: we were told not to discuss anything directly with Kim Dalton or other staff.⁶⁴⁶ As soon as the forum ended, the AFC [people] were whisked out the door

⁶⁴⁵ One email was circulated to a film industry workers’ list by a contact at the FFC, who was disciplined after Dalton complained.

⁶⁴⁶ To expand this point: “About halfway through the proceedings I asked a question – I don’t remember what it was – but Kim Dalton himself didn’t wait for the facilitator...he leapt to his feet, spun around and pointed at me across the crowd and said ‘I’m glad you asked that question, ****, because I can now say in public that you have been spreading lies and rumours about me and the AFC not only nationally but internationally’. He displayed his hand beautifully and I should have responded by asking him to give chapter and verse on the lies and rumours, because anything I circulated was solid fact and solid principle.”

into waiting taxis, so they didn't wait around to have any conversation. A complete farce – in Melbourne particularly, where there was a vote of no confidence from the audience: wonderful to hear about.”

AFC'S MANAGEMENT

Style: C recalls “The AFC responded to things in [letters columns]...the tragedy is that they would get [Archive] staff members to write some of those letters to respond to the Friends and ...they were forced to defend an iniquitous situation.” N remembers: “I'd see people come out [of meetings] looking very upset and they'd be devastated again and again. It was terrible. Being yelled at, told 'we're sick of discussion – just get used to it.' [Some people left the Archive but] the people I knew were going to stay come hell or high water. I felt a great sense of relief and justice [when the name was reinstated] and the Archive's natural trajectory towards becoming a statutory authority [was finally fulfilled].”

Attitude: “There was very much Sydney versus Canberra” remembers E. “[According to the AFC, Canberra people] were parochial, ignorant, country bumpkins. No respect. AFC staff were always extremely professional and very condescending. A total lack of respect for individuals and the organisation. They completely dismantled programs. They didn't give reasons. Many people left: senior people jumped before they thought they were going to lose their jobs. It gave [the Archive] a poor reputation and earned [it] the pity [of other institutions]”.

Agenda: E recalls “It was nasty, but Kim Dalton had obviously been given some brief to get the Archive moving, get rid of dead wood, make it an AFC-style organisation.” Yes, adds D, “the AFC clearly had their own agenda. They really didn't want to learn: they saw the sort of sexy public face, access services, the online delivery as the one thing they

wanted. And they were prepared to slice that off and ship it to William Street – ‘I’ll have that, thanks.’ The Archive is like an iceberg: it’s the tip you see above the water everyone wants to get their hands on. It’s only there because there’s ninety percent of things going on underneath to actually hold it up.”

Limited understanding: G remembers “One felt one had to be [cautiously optimistic at the beginning] because it was a done deal and if you were too antagonistic you might make things more difficult” remembers G. “People like **** were convinced it was all done to get the Archive’s money. I think Kim genuinely felt the relationship was worthwhile, but his [understanding] of the Archive was very limited. It was there to support the industry by storing and looking after its films and doing a bit of access and exhibition. No big picture stuff. Totally short sighted.”

Appeasement: “[Surprisingly] I was invited to be on the NFSA Advisory Committee during that period. I think it was to try and silence me...” said C, who interpreted this, and other actions – like restoring the NFSA’s name and taking over the old NLA film lending collection - as attempts to appease critics: but it was too little, too late.

Damage: “Kim Dalton claimed the Archive never lost anything through the AFC merger” remembers L. “I was [recording an oral history] with Val Morgan, who had his complete company archive.⁶⁴⁷ He asked me where he should lodge it. I advised him not to put it in the NFSA because it would risk becoming part of a commercial enterprise. I advised him to put it elsewhere – as the lesser of two evils. I don’t think I could have done anything else. It was something the NFSA lost. They should have had it.” G adds “The rebranding was terrible in a surface sort of way, but I don’t think it made any serious changes to the

⁶⁴⁷ Val Morgan Theatre Ads. was a major player in the cinema exhibition business and the company archive would have been an asset to the NFSA: in another repository it might be less accessible. It was not the only example of NFSA missing out because of its AFC connection: the Friends of the NFSA placed the association’s papers with the NLA on the grounds that its relationship with the AFC was adversarial, and the AFC could not be trusted to honour the integrity of its material.

actual body – the [Archive] went on doing the same things. But the AFC amalgamation could have totally damaged it. And it was only because it lasted a relatively short time...”

Being used: “AFC branded Big Screen [touring film festival] as their own, [although] NFSA was a strong participant years and years ago. We were [already] partners, but the AFC regarded it as theirs only”, remembers **E**. “They used [the Archive] as a sort of preservation and stock footage area. They’d use its facilities without appropriate acknowledgement as if it was a factory.”

Conflict: **E** recalls “To most of us at the time [the merger] seemed a conflict of interest. You’ve got [production] funding and archiving and they don’t mix, and they didn’t. There were some industry bodies that didn’t like the AFC merger. The AFC didn’t have a wonderful reputation. [The Archive’s] stakeholders and clients voiced their opinions regularly.”

Ability: “They didn’t have the financial expertise to run an organisation like [the Archive]”, considers **A**. “ [The AFC] was a small policy and financing institution of 40 people in Sydney that took over a large 220 person archive machine with shops, cafes, with factories, with collections to manage – they were totally ill equipped. [The Archive] was setting world’s best practice and they set about trying to destroy it.”

RESTORING THE NAME

Why NFSA? **M** remembers “I certainly had misgivings about joining [the Archive] with the AFC. I think [their] management were listening to passionate, vocal, active supporters of the Archive and the original name – probably more passionate than those

supporting the new name. Clearly they had the ear and sway of AFC management and a sympathetic Arts minister”.

Enforcing the AFC link: D recalls “I even had some hate mail from the AFC over the name. [I was] told that although National Film and Sound Archive was reinstated as the name, when used in public it had to be followed by the postscript ‘a division of the AFC’, spelt out in full. If [you] just said ‘I’m from the National Film and Sound Archive’ [you’d] get a rap over the knuckles. It seemed their way of having a trophy on the wall.”⁶⁴⁸

...and losing identity: “There are Hansard assurances about the future of the Archive, and Kim Dalton breached some of those assurances” remembers A. “Changing the name back didn’t help when the Archive lost its email address and internet address and was just part of the AFC.”

Film or screen? “With ScreenSound there was a missed opportunity”, reflects D. “If you dissect the original name and where it might have headed, the word ‘film’ was problematic... ‘screen culture’ is a more modern invention which includes everything from the cinema experience...through to television to people downloading YouTube on the internet right through to hand-held devices. [For the AFC] it was a territorial thing. They liked to be able to carve out a very broad brief....When it suited them, the AFC was happy to talk about screen culture, but at the heart of their identity they would never have changed to the Australian Screen Commission...they still argued that film as a kind of word may be shot on video or actual film – no one bothered much.....when they reinstated the original name of the Archive they didn’t want to mess with that for a whole bunch of reasons and they really hammered home sticking with the ‘F’ word at that stage.”

⁶⁴⁸ D expands: “I was involved in [professional forums] and if people said ‘where have you been working’ I’d say National Film and Sound Archive. I got these letters from AFC lawyers. I was not being charged. I sent a reply back through my lawyer to challenge them to prosecute. I was sent copies of the APS Act and the Public Service Code of Conduct and the Crimes Act, and part of it was to do with various sordid rumours going around about activities in the Archive and they were trying to imply I was part of it. I said “put up or shut up” and they never could [pursue the matter].”

L adds: “[Restoring the name] brought enormous relief. I [have a little doubt] about ‘film’ – ‘National Screen and Sound Archive’ might have been better. There is an argument there, but at the time it was politically important to go back to NFSA. If ever there was another change, that’s the one I would change. At the moment, there are too many other problems to worry about.”

ARCHIVE FORUM AND THE FRIENDS

The fight: **F** recalls “Archive Forum and other groups fought very hard to overcome [the AFC merger], but the whole thing seemed a nonsense. I don’t understand what was driving it. I couldn’t believe that this was happening. Sabina Wynn had been given the task - her handling of it was really, really bad. She made it like her first task was to offend people. There was a huge resistance to this change. What would happen to the NFSA’s identity? Having fought for so long to establish it under its own flag and its own authority, and having missed the opportunity in the mid-eighties under Barry Cohen, to then suddenly having it subsumed by a group that had no real sympathy for, or connection with, the Archive. It was a really hairy time. Whether it was Kemp’s idea, or Dalton’s, or someone in the Liberal Party, or a departmental initiative – it sucked.”

Lobbying: **L** remembers: “I was very proud of what [Archive Forum] did and the way it worked. It operated by consensus. Everybody contributed as far as they could, documents were done by the most appropriate people, comments came in from all the right areas and were put together. There were meetings [with Kim Dalton and others] and they were pretty fraught. I think he genuinely could not understand what we were on about: he just thought we were pigheaded. Immovable object meeting irresistible force. [In Canberra] we went round to each political party’s spokesperson. The Democrats’ Aden Ridgeway had really done his homework before we arrived and seemed to know what we were talking about. And [Labor’s Kate Lundy] was really quite

good. I had the sense the industry was divided. People either loved the Archive or hated it with a passion. I could never understand why. It could have been empire building: the AFC's brief had been gradually whittled away, and if it got the Archive...."

Unifying: A recalls: "It reassured the Labor side of politics that something had to be done when even the Liberal senator from Canberra [said so.] But there was also strong unambiguous industry and constituency support. The Friends and Archive Forum [swung] behind a single message – they moved on from the debate about the name because it had been changed back. They should have dropped the [name issue] earlier. When they did it provided a strong platform for the future." **E** adds: "Archive Forum helped. They were strong advocates. It had been a Labor party promise for years, and having the Libs in for so long – that helped. We've always been quite clever, I think, in how we manage our politicians. We look at both government and opposition....walk down the straight line, not insulting either side, and it's paid off."

Conference: "The conference [organised by the Friends of NFSA and the Australian Society of Archivists in mid 2004] on the future of the NFSA was quite a significant event" adds **C**, "It built public support for the independence of the NFSA and encouraging the AFC to just be a bit careful about how it was handling the Archive."

EVALUATION OF THE MERGER

C noted "my overall feeling about the AFC is one of betrayal...of trust, of support. They'd seriously misjudged their constituency."

K adds: "There are still some elements of the AFC attached to the new NFSA which I don't like at all. There are white ants in the woodwork. I was surprised at some of the

AFC staff still being attached to the Archive. They had their own agenda, and it wasn't suited to an archive. Sydney tried to take over lock, stock and barrel. Thankfully we had a change of government – if the Howard government had been re-elected, the AFC would still be there. While [Screen Australia]⁶⁴⁹ is a basket case, the whole thing has been a blessing in disguise for the Archive. Hopefully the Archive will move ahead and get rid of any traces of the Canberra-centric National Library culture that really has been hard to shift. I can [still] never get anyone to answer the phone straight away, and trying to get decisions out of them is still a battle.”

E remembers “Both **** and **** are very good in different ways. The both knew government, who to talk to and what to say. Sadly, Kim Dalton [also] knew what to do. He was good at getting the wrong things. But he had the ear of government, knew how to flatter and schmooze them - Parliamentary screenings, drinkies for everybody - and get his way. Not necessarily get anything, but he got money for what is now ‘Australian screen online’. There was jubilation [at the Archive, with the new era]. It was like a big blanket had been lifted off and the organisation and individuals in it were actually positive for the first time in probably five years.”

The oral histories in this project contain some contrasting opinions of individuals, events and actions. However, views of the AFC's stewardship of the NFSA from 2003 to early 2006, as expressed by the majority of interviewees, are so unanimously and emphatically negative and personalised that I have chosen to exclude most of them from the above compilation, while leaving enough to convey the flavour. After Kim Dalton's departure, there were significant and positive changes in the working relationships between AFC, NFSA and stakeholder groups which lasted for the rest of the AFC's stewardship.

⁶⁴⁹ The merger of the AFC, FFC and Film Australia

4.2.7 THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE ACT, 2008

How did you react to the passage of the Act? Why do you think the Act came about? Do you think it provides an adequate basis for the long term or does it fall short? What lessons for the future can be learned from this history – for the NFSA and cultural institutions generally – for example, about marketing and branding, governance, publicity, management, relations with stakeholders, organisational philosophy and rationale, ethics?

TRANSITION

Once the new government made the decision to separate the NFSA from the AFC, there were rapid negotiations about the split-up of assets and programs. The discussions involved Archive Forum and Friends of NFSA.

“The AFC Chair (Maureen Barron) and Acting CEO (Chris Fitchett) handled the transition smoothly and competently” recalls C. “I think they were really aware that things had gone seriously awry under the Dalton regime. It was politely never mentioned, and it was assumed that outcomes would be those we all wanted. It was not an easy thing to undo the work of the AFC years. There was cautious acknowledgement by Barron that Dalton may not have been acting entirely appropriately on all occasions. Sabina Wynn disappeared before the transition.”⁶⁵⁰

“A couple of longer-serving AFC staff who were staying behind⁶⁵¹ were consoled – ‘oh, gee, you guys are going to the baddies’ (so to speak)” remembers D. “Not long after the [2003] takeover one of their very senior staff, [at a social function], was told by a distant

⁶⁵⁰ Her position was transferred to NFSA in the split-up, so she may have briefly become a NFSA staff member before she left to seek work elsewhere.

⁶⁵¹ Because their function had now been transferred to the NFSA

acquaintance ‘it’s terrible what the AFC is doing to the Film and Sound Archive’ – and the senior officer was hurt and thought it was all a big misunderstanding. The senior officer thought the press had misrepresented the AFC: the hurt feelings were on the AFC side.”

“It came to an end. That was wonderful” recalls **E** with satisfaction. “And what we got from the AFC, much to their disgust, was their touring programs: Big Screen, Black Screen, and school screen. “

“It came about through a mix of things but political pressure was a big issue. An election at the right time and the right government (for the NFSA) winning it” thought **A**. “[It would have been difficult] getting it through a conservative government – it was easier for Labor to say ‘we’re going to do something else’. Key Labor figures like Bob Hawke and Barry Cohen had been instrumental in creating the Archive. Although they weren’t active politically, they still moved in those circles and were able to add pressure. ACT federal politicians at the time – Bob McMullan, Kate Lundy – were strong friends of the Archive; interestingly, [Liberal senator] Gary Humphries was also prepared to stand up and be counted.”

THE ACT

“We applauded the Act” said **K**. “And once again the industry was totally united and totally opposed to the AFC’s mismanagement of the Archive. Total unmitigated disaster. There was self interest and smugness on behalf of everyone at the AFC.” **E** reminisces: “It was lovely wondering what the future would hold...exciting, positive and a long time coming (twenty five-plus years). [The NFSA] is where it should be. There’s still no legal deposit – that’s an issue – but the Act is adequate. It covers cultural heritage and is not

so much about format. It encompasses providing access and education. Digital is a very big problem: what do you collect and who's collecting what?"

Complementation with NAA: "NAA is vastly under-resourced for its task in managing film, sound and video from government agencies" notes **D**. "It would have been nice if [NFSA and NAA] could have worked closely and resolved all those issues under one roof. The perception of which archives do what haunts us to this day. No re-brandings or mergers [made any difference]. And then the ABC at Ultimo is essentially working as a closed shop just for ABC productions." **K** adds: "A question going begging is whether the NAA's film and sound collection should be put with NFSA. It's been put to me that NFSA represents the commercial side of the industry's deposits and NAA looks after the government's. They do and they don't. And Film Australia's collection has gone to NAA. It should be at the NFSA so it can be integrated in the catalogue."⁶⁵²

CONCLUSIONS

Marketing: "The Archive has never provided enough funding for marketing and advertising. It's always been on the cheap" says **E**. "[It hasn't been] supported or understood enough. You get what you pay for in the end. There are still people that have never heard of NFSA [compared to the Australian War Memorial and the National Museum]. Why? Is it [their] collections? Their buildings? For me, it's the money they invest. [The AFC] dismantled public programs and it takes a long time to rebuild. It's still not where it should be. [The NFSA] had a very strong over-fifties market – they buy from the shop and eat at the cafe, they're great supporters – and they still haven't come back. [The NFSA misses out through not being in the Parliamentary Triangle]⁶⁵³ and

⁶⁵² Film Australia's collection – or at least a large part of it – has since come to the NFSA, along with associated staff. The move was announced in June 2011.

⁶⁵³ During the period following the cancellation of the Acton building extension in 1996, one of the many relocation options considered was to share space in the John Gorton building (adjacent to Old Parliament House and the National Archives). It had advantages and disadvantages, but like the other options it was ultimately rejected on

[Acton] is not the quaint backwater it used to be. You bring staff and stakeholders on board. You really review [what you're doing] and look at other organisations globally and what has, and hasn't, worked for them. It's a big thing to change a name. I'm not saying don't do it, but if you do, do it slowly and well. It has to be well considered."

4.2.8 REMAINING QUESTIONS

The four remaining questions dealt mainly with the larger picture of government responsibility to collecting institutions, the role of stakeholder groups and whether the sequence of events since 1935 has helped or hindered the preservation and accessibility of the audiovisual heritage, and the rationale for NFSA's existence. They were at the end of the question list and most interviewees did not address them. The questions can be checked at [Appendix 5](#). The following are the comments that were forthcoming.

HELPED OR HINDERED?

"During the NLA days [numerous] opportunities were lost to preserve films thoroughly to long term [standards]: there were quick solutions," considers **C**. "Here's a deteriorating nitrate print of an old Australian feature film. It's too expensive to copy properly: we'll do it on 16mm and dump the nitrate. Just think of the number of extraordinary films that were badly copied and originals disposed of: *Sunshine Sally*, *Possum Paddock*, the Longford Lyell films and so on. There was no sense of their real cultural value: they were an oddity, a curiosity, an adjunct to the lending library." **K** adds: "It's been totally hindered from 1935, from the outset, of progress and initiative."

practical and economic grounds. As **E** remembers "National Archives gets the spillover from Old Parliament House [and the National Gallery and Portrait Gallery are nearby]."

RATIONALE FOR THE NFSA

Research and accessibility: “You can’t afford to be without any institution that allows a nation to identify with its culture.” says K. “And certainly through visual and sound, the aural collection in our history has to be as important as the visual collection. So yes, we would be much worse off if there hadn’t been [the NFSA]. You should structure it much like a lending library. You should be able to say, ‘I’m researching Franklin Barrett,’ for example, and someone in Documents and Stills in Canberra should be able to say, ‘Well come down on Thursday at 9 am and we will have everything ready for you to look at.’ I’m not sure that they’re that well equipped to do that. [But it’s what they should do.] It’s got to be more than a repository. The public should be able to walk in the front door in McCoy Circuit, and if they’re looking for sound recording of Peter Dawson they should be able to go and hear it and order a copy of it. Where will they go? To the girl at the front desk? I doubt if she’d know what they were talking about. They’re very helpful. But they don’t strike me as moving with the speed of other institutions. That might be an unfair criticism. It takes far too long [to curate collections so they are accessible]. They have to ask for more money.”

Different institutions for different needs: “National cultural institutions are responsible for chunks of national culture as they naturally fall”, comments A. “So paintings and art works and sculptures naturally fall into a group. They’re distinct from written texts because of how they’re distributed, the value of the original object versus the copy and so on. They are treated differently, we engage and get access differently, you use different people to manage them. So the NLA is different from the NGA. The AWM is another beast again: a different experience conveyed in a different way. The NFSA is not about film, or television, or audio tape, LP records or 78s. They are the accoutrements. It is about the heritage that is contained as moving image and sound, and because it is contained so differently from other forms of heritage, you need to have a stand alone institution. It could have been a division, as in America, of the NLA and that works just fine, but it works even better being more removed and independent.

Now we've got it, its rationale is different, it works, and that to me, is the be all and end all. I don't get too philosophical about it. You need to be practical."

A goes on: "Moving images and sound are now the dominant media of cultural interchange, and you cannot move back from the concept that they need a strong, separate focus and the Archive will go from strength to strength. The NLA will never disappear, but its role will evolve dramatically; written text won't disappear; books might. At the end of the day, moving images and sound will always be a different thing, as far as we can see into the future. They'll be conveyed differently, they'll be used differently and this comes back to some [crucial] statistics.⁶⁵⁴ The NFSA has the most widely accessed collection in the country."

DUTY OF CARE/ RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC SERVICE

"Responsibility [is entailed] if you've done something about getting a response" considers **K**. "And unless you have a minister that's au fait with the Archive and likes to drop in every now and again you're in trouble. We desperately need an Arts Minister. I'm sick to death of sport being given priority over everything else. [It's reported that] more people attend the arts in Australia than attend football or sport."

A believes governments have a strong obligation. "[Unlike taxes or unemployment benefits] which governments have to do, it's an area that needs moral courage, people standing up and being counted and saying, 'We know there are long hospital waiting queues. But you also have to spend money here'. It's not a trade off to say, 'If we take the Archive's \$20 million a year and put it in hospital waiting queues, they'd shorten'.

⁶⁵⁴ **A** adds: "Between 72 and 84 per cent of the Australian population sees or hears something from the Archive every year. At least 60 per cent sees or hears half an hour's worth of material. No other institution has comparable influence or relevance to the Australian population. In contrast, how many have visited the NGA or even seen a single work from it?"

They would, but minutely. The real issue is that this costs only eight cents per Australian per day⁶⁵⁵. People won't necessarily understand its importance, but they *would* understand if they had no identity, no image like the dancing man, or the bandaged guy on the Kokoda Trail supported by the fuzzy wuzzy angel next to him, or Gough Whitlam saying, 'Well may we say God save the Queen, for nothing will save the Governor-General'. Governments have to understand that - because people won't, necessarily. The responsibility is absolute, and unlike other areas of government, it is not about the public will as expressed through elections. It is where ministers and public servants show leadership. A key difference."

E concurs: "[Governments have a duty of care] because nobody else will do it. [In some] other countries governments don't support archives like [NFSA] at all. There is no support whatsoever, unless you've got a benefactor. I do think that it's duty of care, very much so. I don't think [NFSA has] always been supported. It's not just under the AFC. I think it was given the building and then let go and it wasn't funded appropriately. So there were always constant battles to get more money. I think the government understands the necessity, but I don't think it's always willing to provide the financial support and appropriation."

STAKEHOLDERS

There are different kinds of stakeholders, as A notes. "In places like the NGA, you have wealthy people who are interested in art. You'll never have this for the NFSA, it's a different constituency. You have famous people genuinely interested, people like Bruce Beresford, Bryan Brown, Sigrid Thornton. You bring Sigrid to an event and suddenly it's important for government - not just because she's famous and well known, but also a loved and esteemed Australian figure. Peter Garrett was a regular private visitor to the exhibitions, long before he became the Archive's minister and drove through its

⁶⁵⁵ Some years ago this was a classic argument in support of funding the ABC.

legislation. These people will stand up and be counted when you need them. I think the constituency has an obligation but they've actually done well. When you need articles in journals and letters to the minister, they're there. The constituency is what saved the Archive from Kim Dalton and the AFC."

GENERAL COMMENTS

The collection may be precious and widely accessed but "the Archive doesn't own [the copyright in] most of its collection" says E. "Ninety percent is owned by someone else, so there are issues in providing access to and limitations to what it can do. How do you watermark something that's not actually yours?"⁶⁵⁶ A lot of television stations remove watermarking. The War Memorial watermarks every piece of footage. If only NFSA could do that. It's a subliminal message. If it had a clean slate it should stick with the three core functions, but then brand and mark, spend some money on developing who it is, rather than just bringing everything in and preserving everything. You need to demonstrate why you should exist. Proactive programs. [I recall] the Operation Newsreel program: everybody knew about it. The NFSA could have [kept doing it] but didn't."

⁶⁵⁶ Watermarking is the process of electronically superimposing a small logo at the corner of a video image to indicate the identity of the source or supplier.

**Every society honours its live conformists
and its dead troublemakers**

Mignon McLaughlin, *The Neurotic's Notebook*, 1963

The research question asks:

What were the historical factors that made the emergence of the NFSA so erratic and protracted? What were the effects and risks and how were they dealt with? What were the broader consequences? What lessons may be learned?

And the sub-questions ask:

What is the history of the NFSA? Why did the NFSA emerge at all, and why did it take so long? What was the influence of the NFSA's operational context and circumstances (professional, government, administrative)?

The literature review (**Chapter 2**) surveyed existing writings across the global and national field of memory institutions, to provide a current and historical frame of reference for the NFSA: its operational context. It also surveyed literature in several fields which particularly impinge on NFSA's history and circumstances: mergers and demergers, stakeholders and advocacy, management consulting, and marketing, positioning and branding.

Chapter 3, *The NFSA in context*, is a chronological history of the NFSA's emergence from 1935 to 2008, based on a variety of published and unpublished written sources, as well as existing oral histories and other audiovisual material. **Chapter 4** is a distillation of quotations and narratives from the new series of oral history recordings made, as part of the project, with players in the historical events. These capture recollections of, and mature reflections on, those events.

In this chapter these three streams are analysed and synthesised to arrive at answers to the research question. Information from Chapter 2 is identified by the term **literature**

and from Chapter 4 by the term **interview(s)**. All other comment is derived from Chapter 3. The comments are presented as five key turning points in the NFSA's history:

- Emergence as part of the NLA
- Separation from the NLA
- The rebranding of the NFSA
- The merger of the NFSA with the AFC
- The demerger and achievement of NFSA's statutory status

The first of these turning points is necessarily presented as a cumulative continuum from 1935 to approximately 1980. The others are presented as specific points of transition, considered in their context. Each is analysed, in turn, against sub-topics.

5.2 EMERGENCE AS PART OF THE NLA 1935-1980

INTRODUCTION

During the pioneering and evolutionary period, the elements of a future autonomous audiovisual archive progressively emerged, though not necessarily in a neat or logical order. A chronological template might be as follows:

- 1935: Establishment of National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library (NHFR)
- 1945: Establishment of CNL Film Division (FD)
- 1951-2: Failed autonomy bid for the FD
- 1957: Paton Committee leaves FD in NLA "for the time being"
- 1950s-1960s: Development of the Historical Collection of films
- 1973 onward: Establishment of film archive and music/sound units: identity becomes clearer
- 1970s: Growing external scrutiny of NLA's performance in film and sound areas

The NHFR began in 1935, was suspended during World War II, and was superseded in 1945 by the FD, primarily a 16mm film lending library which also, in principle, recognised the continuing need to collect sound recordings and historical films. Whether the pre-war collection, for which there is no known surviving inventory, was inherited by the FD is unclear. The FD joined FIAF in 1959. Up to 1972 its small Historical Collection of film grew slowly. Lacking dedicated staff, basic technical equipment and facilities, it was a Cinderella activity relative to the demands of the film lending operation. The later functional division between 'lending' and 'archive' was unclear. In 1956 the FD, with a staff of fifteen, was one of six *divisions* of the CNL, all of them reporting directly to the National Librarian. By 1968, with a staff of twenty two, the *Film Collection and Services* was now merely a *section*⁶⁵⁷ with two or three reporting layers above it.

The film archive and the music/sound recordings sections of the NLA were created and staffed in 1972-73. Initially the term 'film archive' was deemed contrary to NLA orthodoxy, even if standard within FIAF. The Music Section included sound recordings but this was not reflected in its original title. *National Film Archive* (NFA) and *National Music Library and Sound Recordings Unit* became official titles in 1977, being compatible with a new style of internal nomenclature introduced under George Chandler. The *Sound Recording Section* (SR) was separately identified as such in 1982.⁶⁵⁸

In this section, relevant **literature** includes the writings of Jean Whyte, Harrison Bryan, Harold White, Jan Kenny and Peter Biskup related to the history of NLA and the profession of librarianship. Very little of this, however, is specific to FD and SR or to the audiovisual media seen in their own right.

⁶⁵⁷ Words like *division* and *section* are Public Service terminology and meanings change over time. Nevertheless, by 1968 FD was relatively a far smaller area, of lower status, than in 1956, compared to the NLA as a whole. The 1956 figures are from the Paton Report, the 1968 figures from memory.

⁶⁵⁸ On nomenclature and structure, see also Harrison Bryan's recollection in [Appendix 7](#).

PEOPLE, PERSONALITY TYPES AND LEADERSHIP

Four heads of the CNL/NLA relate to this period: Kenneth Binns (1927- 47), (Sir) Harold White (1947-70), Allan Fleming (1970-74) and George Chandler (1974-1980).

The establishment of NHFR (1935) was in step with best overseas practice at the time (even if it took a narrow view of what constituted 'history') and its creation must be largely owed to Kenneth Binns and Lyn Maplestone. Post-war, this concept was overlaid by the establishment of FD, also a Binns initiative. Under Harold White, John O'Hara's unsuccessful bid to gain autonomy for the FD at least established the Paton Committee's recognition of the fundamental disconnect between film work and "orthodox librarianship".

[Sir] Harold White is a legendary figure, associated with the gaining of the NLA building. While he was perceived by other parts of the NLA to favour the 'glamour section', there is only mixed evidence that he did so. The demand-driven and politically useful lending operation grew inexorably, yet at the same time FD steadily declined in status and visibility within the NLA. On occasion, White promoted the preservation of early Australian film, and appears to have valued the exclusivity and prestige attached to FIAF membership. Yet he ignored its obligations and prevented his film staff from developing personal profiles and opposite-number relationships with their overseas colleagues. Being fully aware, from Larry Lake's 1957 report, of the principles and scope of film archive operation, he did nothing to develop the expertise, policies and facilities of the Historical Collection along comparable lines, and kept it reliant on the spare-time commitment of the FD head. Moreover, he sanctioned the copying of nitrate film onto 16mm and destruction of the originals, in clear violation of FIAF norms. It was the equivalent of photocopying old manuscripts and burning the originals, an approach which one assumes would have been regarded in library circles as vandalism.

Perhaps the times and community attitudes were not propitious, although that could not have been an exclusively Australian problem. FD's continued attachment to the NLA was an inhibition. Increasing the resource base for a non-traditional activity, for which there was little obvious user demand, would not have been well received by other parts of the NLA. White may have been a dogged bureaucratic politician pursuing a worthwhile vision for his library, but he also seems an old-school public service autocrat who dealt ruthlessly with disloyalty (as with John O'Hara) and dismissively with those who were no longer useful (as with Kenneth Binns).⁶⁵⁹

Allan Fleming was well aware of the autonomy issue prior to his 1972 overseas trip. By meeting Lindgren and Ledoux, and by assessing the role that Toeplitz, now in Australia, might play, he was discerning how to regularise the NLA's relationship with FIAF. The creation of the NFA staff unit, the appointment of Ted Vellacott as FD head and the timing of Vellacott's 1973 trip, just ahead of my own, occurred against that background. Jean Whyte's determination to assert her view of librarianship as an all-embracing discipline, contrary to the judgment of the Paton Committee, was not conducive to developing the specialist expertise and sense of vocation which FIAF embodied, and which Lindgren and O'Hara recognised and advocated. The handling of Toeplitz's 1974 report to Council, and the subsequent dismissal of the Edmondson report, suggested an institution fearful of dissenting ideas. During George Chandler's time, Pauline Fanning replaced Jean Whyte and I replaced Ted Vellacott. Fanning's pragmatic approach was accommodating of Peter Martin's AFC Working Party, itself an indicator of closer external scrutiny.

The stand-out personalities of the post-war era were John O'Hara, Larry Lake and Rod Wallace. In an institution which showed little affinity for the audiovisual media, these three completely different individuals demonstrated a love for it and sought to

⁶⁵⁹ As a new recruit in 1968 my first year-and-a-bit in Canberra coincided with the end of White's incumbency. This comment also reflects the personal view I gained at the time. For years after his retirement, White continued to act as if he were still in charge, regularly phoning me and other staff members and expecting us to do favours for him.

champion it in an unsympathetic environment. **Interviewees** recall Wallace, who retired in 1977, as one of the few senior people who supported film and sound. Articulate and persuasive, he worked hard to improve resources. But he was not a risk taker: he needed outside support with which he could then work. Of Wallace's successors Charles Gilbert and Ted Vellacott, **interview** comments (applying to either or both) saw them as time-serving bureaucrats, career building in the Library system.⁶⁶⁰

MANAGEMENT FACTORS AND COUNCIL

From the beginning of the FD in 1945, the activity was never entirely at home in the CNL and attracted resentment from other divisions or sections. As its status in the NLA reduced in later years, it was attached in succession to the (a) Information, Reference and Research (b) Humanities [ANHUL] or (c) Australian Studies branches or areas, none of which comprehended the breadth of its collections or activities. Likewise, in 1973 the international scope of sound recordings was administratively perceived as a subset of music, which in turn was part of Humanities or Australian studies. The early imposition of irrelevant systems, such as shelving films, like books, in Dewey order, or requiring that documentation material be kept in the general stacks rather than FD, added to the burden of running activities which had no affinity with traditional library systems and concepts.

Nor, in the seventies, were users encouraged by front-of-house staff to visit Films, as **interviewees** recall. Right up to 1984, the NLA's conservatism and book orientation was palpable. Audiovisual material was an oddity, a curiosity, an entertainment, not to be taken seriously. Location was eloquent, with FD in the far reaches of the third floor

⁶⁶⁰ The longest serving FD heads were John O'Hara (1947-52), Rod Wallace (1956-65), Charles Gilbert (1965-71), Ted Vellacott (1973-77), Ray Edmondson (1977-84). The others were Squadron Leader Rosenthal (1946-47), Shirley Ward (1953), Dulcie Penfold (1954), Larry Lake (1954-56). Wallace has comments on each. Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup. Heads of the NFA Unit were Ray Edmondson (1973-77), Karen Foley (1977-80), Mike Lynskey (1981-83). Any comments about myself have, as far as possible, been left to the final chapter.

and SR in a windowless basement. Neither received the sumptuous treatment of NLA's other public areas.

Interviewees saw the NFA as an unrelated add-on to the main business of the NFLC. There were no guiding principles or philosophy, no vision or long term planning; the collection of scripts, posters and publicity material was very random. The policy, for economic reasons, of copying 35mm nitrate down to 16mm and burning the originals was "regrettable". **Documents** add that flammable nitrate film was a nuisance to store, so it was better to dispose of it. The practice reflected not only isolation from FIAF colleagues but from the film industry itself. In 1971 the Cinesound Movietone people rebuffed the NLA's proposal that their newsreels could be adequately preserved on 16mm. They insisted on 35mm, as the NLA commenced a major copying project without understanding its own inability to manage it. However, from that point the 35mm standard was restored for all NFA nitrate copying.

In the context of the AFC Working Party, Peter Martin observed that NLA management seemed extremely sensitive about honest staff appraisals of the problems of operating NFA within the NLA. There was a disturbing failure to understand its problems or comprehend the extent to which the NLA's reputation in this area had deteriorated.

The overarching collecting policies of the NLA were problematic for NFA and SR. Neither was a top priority area. The applied definition of 'library materials' in the NLA Act did not include objects, such as vintage technology, which are integral to the character of film and sound archives. Important items and collections went elsewhere, or were unofficially acquired. Similarly, the NLA ethos of free public access clashed with the business practices of the audiovisual industries and caused operational problems. The requirement for professional staff in FD to have librarianship qualifications, which were unnecessary for most of the work, was a recruitment inhibition. Nor did it mitigate the fact that they were, in any case, professionally isolated.

Films and sound recordings were never integral to the NLA. Their systems, clientele and expertise remained different, having little to do with orthodox librarianship and its culture. They were not embraced in the institutional mindset. Just as the 'glamour section' was derided in the 1940s, in the 1980s there was "general approbation throughout the Library any time Films were seen to 'get their come uppance'".⁶⁶¹

POLITICAL FACTORS

John O'Hara's 1951-52 bid for FD autonomy presented White with an uncomfortable precedent in the lead up to the Paton Committee, which he was desperately trying to influence. O'Hara's support base of state film libraries maintained the rage, so to speak, until the Committee finally met in 1956. It was evidently presented, via a proxy, with O'Hara's views. This traumatic episode, along with continuing anger over the loss of the Archives Division, became part of the corporate memory.

A subtext to events during the 1970s was the NLA's acute initial sensitivity over the use of the FIAF terms 'film archive' or 'national film archive', such that they were suppressed for a time. Although, under George Chandler, *National Film Archive* became official NLA terminology, there were those in the library and archives communities, such as Robert Sharman, who clearly objected to it. So, too, did AA. Intent on both establishing its legislative base and projecting the identity of the archives profession, it asserted an ownership of the terms 'archive' and 'archives' contrary to NLA usage. As the passage of the Archives Bill loomed, the NLA was preoccupied with issues more important to it than the disposition of its film activities. It was intent on protecting its primacy in the collecting of personal papers, especially the papers of politicians, from inroads by AA. Using dubious logic, and reversing the position the CAO took with the Paton Committee, AA staked a claim to be the preservation authority for those films and

⁶⁶¹ Bryan, No Gray Profession.

sound recordings which it defined as government records, thereby splitting the responsibility for preserving the national audiovisual heritage. Unwilling to defend the strategic potential of the NFA, the NLA acquiesced in AA's claim. It brought a stinging rebuke from Senator Chris Puplick.

In August 1975, the Department of the Special Minister of State called stakeholders to a meeting on the "maximum utilisation of film archives" followed a year later by the AFC's *Working Party on the NFA* (WP). Useful practical outcomes aside, the NLA was put on notice to justify its stewardship of the NFA.⁶⁶² When the WP report finally reached the NLA Council, in the dying days of Chandler's incumbency, it joined the Toeplitz statement and the Edmondson report in being quickly buried. This time, however, the issues would not go away. The AFC countered by publicly releasing the report, and the Minister requested action. Chandler's successor, Harrison Bryan, had to respond.

INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY GROUPS/MEDIA

Forgotten Cinema (1966), *The Pictures that Moved* (1968) and *The Passionate Industry* (1973) were the first compilation films to track the history of the Australian film industry. All drew on the NFA, and presaged an awakening public interest in the audiovisual heritage. In June 1975, the Sydney Film Festival staged *Salute to Australian Film*, the first major retrospective of Australian cinema. It was at both the Sydney and Melbourne festivals that a new advocacy group, the Association for a National Film and Television Archive (AFTA), made its presence felt by distributing a leaflet, *Films in peril*, which called attention to the parlous situation of the NFA and the need for an autonomous archive separate from the NLA.

⁶⁶² The NLA was challenged to accommodate the evolution and autonomy of the NFA: "if it cannot be achieved within the Library, the Archive's future must remain clouded, and the alternative of separate development would appear desirable, if not inevitable."

AFTA had been formed the previous year, taking its cue from the Edmondson report, the concerns of the researchers and filmmakers behind the compilation films, pioneering academic researchers in the field and, in all probability, some of the individuals or organisations to whose complaints Ernest Lindgren had referred in his 1969 letters. AFTA was assiduous in its production of newsletters, in debating issues with the NLA in the columns of *Cinema Papers*, and in generally raising awareness among the users and supporters of the NFA. It joined FIAF as an observer. AFTA's visibility added to the NLA's discomfort over the unfolding activity of the AFC WP. **Literature** includes AFTA's newsletters and other publications.

Interviewees add a shared belief from this time that the NFA would inevitably separate from the NLA. The newly reviving film industry could not take credit for what ultimately happened, being preoccupied in re-establishing the industry itself. Credit belonged to individual 'boffins' and 'agitators'. The NLA resented change. The establishment of staff units for SR and NFA was a political necessity, but did not mean that NLA was taking these areas seriously.

RISK

John O'Hara's risky activism in 1951-52 cost him dearly. Had he succeeded, the future might have been very different. Instead, the progress of archiving through the 1950s and 1960s depended tenuously on the diligent, out-of-hours work of Rod Wallace, and on his decision to work within the strictures of the NLA system. Personal continuity was crucial. If Wallace had left or transferred, the work would have stopped and many film finds would not have happened. With the establishment of NFA and Music/SR units in 1973, personal continuity proved crucial to growth, and the building not only of collections and services but also a support base.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶³ Peter Burgis and I were the supervisors of the two units from their inception. Our continued presence until the 1984 departure from the NLA was, I believe, a crucial factor in the course of events. As a qualified librarian there were points at which I could have been transferred to other parts of the NLA, against my wishes; indeed, during my first two "bonded" years (1969, 1970) it was NLA policy to rotate base grade librarians every six months to broaden

During the decade, external activism towards autonomy gradually built. Although systems, clientele and staff structure remained separate from the NLA mainstream, an imposed orthodoxy had to be managed. The AFC's Peter Martin, chair of WP, drew attention to this risk by pointing out how heavily the NLA depended on a tiny group of dedicated staff, whose specialisation restricted their promotional opportunities. The loss of even one or two would mean the loss of much accumulated knowledge.

EXTERNAL ISSUES

Literature notes the film archive movement grew from the 1930s onward (FIAF was established in 1938), especially after World War II, and sound archiving finding an independent voice with the emergence of IASA in 1969. The cultural prejudice of existing institutions, which discounted film and sound recordings because of their entertainment and commercial aura, and because they did not easily fit their existing management systems, meant that new types of entity emerged to save and popularise the heritage. If they were not stand-alone institutions, FIAF members had to meet strict criteria to demonstrate their autonomy within a parent organisation. Considerable leniency was afforded the NLA.⁶⁶⁴

Whether or not Australia suffered a “cultural cringe” after the World War II, its feature film industry was moribund, and television and sound recording industries were dominated by imported material.⁶⁶⁵ There was a general disregard, both inside and

their experience. From the outset, I was not interested in working elsewhere in the NLA and, to its credit, I was never made to. But there was a price. I was warned by my peers, with the best of intentions, that staying in Films was not a good career move and that people got ‘buried’ there.

⁶⁶⁴ A FIAF statement of 1969 spelt out the requirements. Rod Wallace recalls that Lindgren had persuaded FIAF to be lenient when admitting the Film Division to membership in 1959, but by 1969 he was obviously having second thoughts. Wallace, Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup.

⁶⁶⁵ Radio was a stand-out: music apart, syndicated programming was for the most part staunchly Australian, as was news, current affairs and sport programming.

outside the NLA, of the permanent value of Australian films, television and radio, and hence little public pressure on the NLA to preserve them. **Literature** indicates Wallace's and Gilbert's observation that, in the public view, Australian films were generally worthless. That changed in the 1970s, with the flowering of the arts, the rebirth of the feature film industry, colour television, expansion of radio and the record industry, and the establishment of bodies like the AFTS, AFC and ACA. **Literature** also indicates the standards and criteria set by FIAF and IASA.

It is logical that such bodies began to take a serious interest in the state of archiving and, in time, to question to validity of the NFA and SR attachment to the NLA. Pressure was put on the NLA by the FRTB to strengthen the film study aspect of the NFLC in order to support cinema studies in schools and universities. While the media industries had taken no action to protect their own backlog⁶⁶⁶ there was renewed external interest in the film and sound heritage and demand for access to it.

ETHICAL ISSUES

John O'Hara faced the same ethical dilemma of 'disloyalty' that others would face in the future. In the context of a fact-finding exercise like the Paton Committee, ethical behaviour perhaps depended on one's point of view. White's attempt to be appointed a member of the Committee would have made him judge and jury in his own case, yet he pursued that objective insistently, if unsuccessfully. Dr T R Schellenberg faced the same dilemma in expressing a view on whether national archives should be separate from the national library, conscious of an obligation to White as his host.⁶⁶⁷ The Committee decided in favour of the CAC's view and against White.

⁶⁶⁶ Television was still young and much programming had been transmitted live, so the backlog was not large. Radio had its commercial record and tape libraries for syndicated programs and the sound recording companies were mostly multi-nationals.

⁶⁶⁷ Piggott, "The Visit of Dr T R Schellenberg to Australia."

The Edmondson report expressed my honest views arising from the study trip, as I knew Toeplitz expected me to. NLA management first sought to influence the report before submission, and afterwards, without my knowledge, undermined and dismissed it in the eyes of the NLA Council. I was merely informed that I had damaged my career. Together with the NLA's treatment of Toeplitz's own report to NLA Council, these several instances make interesting case studies in ethical behaviour. Relevant **literature** includes the writings of Dietrich Borchardt and Jean Whyte on the ethical responsibilities of librarians.

CONCLUSION

For this chronological period the **interview** evidence is limited. The **literature** aligns with the strivings for identity and growth in audiovisual archiving which the documentary evidence shows, but the **documentary** evidence also demonstrates the pressure to impose NLA orthodoxy on FD and SR without responding to their particular needs. By the end of the period the growing tensions are very apparent.

It could be validly argued that the post war elements of the future NFSA may have developed *within* the NLA, but *in spite of* it, not because of it. In a long but ambivalent relationship, initiatives almost always came from within FD and SR. The parent institution had no practical, entrepreneurial or visionary contribution to make. Professionally, the disciplines and worldview of librarianship were of limited value and, more often than not, got in the way of their logical development. The collections and the connection with the audiovisual world were exploited by the NLA when useful to it, but the film and sound clienteles and professional milieu overlapped only marginally with the rest of the NLA. Growth in resourcing seems to have been largely, if not entirely, a reaction to external pressure, which the NLA also resented and resisted.

INTRODUCTION

As the 1980s opened, the NFA worked on demonstrating the wider role of an entrepreneurial national film archive in society, and in quick succession came a string of internally conceived and externally funded projects: the travelling *Cinema Australia 1896-1956* retrospective, a reconstruction of the 1927 film *For the term of his natural life*, and *The Last Film Search*. These raised the NFA's profile. An **interviewee** recalled the *Search* as a "fantastic" project which helped forge a separate identity for the NFA and warranted it being independent. Meanwhile, SR was rapidly expanding its collection, and developing a wide user and support base.

PEOPLE, PERSONALITY TYPES AND LEADERSHIP

Harrison Bryan became NLA Director General in July 1980, and the separation of the NFSA happened on his watch. **Literature** includes his pertinent recollections, excerpted at [Appendix 7](#). The NLA Council at the time was largely drawn from academia, the judiciary, the bureaucracy and politics. There was no one with a background in the audiovisual media, itself a good reason for establishing the NFAAC.

Literature: Writing just before his departure in 1984, long standing public affairs officer Ian Healy⁶⁶⁸ painted a disturbing picture of the NLA's culture, which he found to be secretive and extremely status conscious. Its corporate posture on publicity was "enigmatical". It had no overall policy and almost never indicated what it wanted. He added that Australian Studies branch and FD had so much newsworthy material that they needed publicity officers of their own. He commented that FD's "self-engendered

⁶⁶⁸ Healy, [Review of Publicity/Public Relations Activity in the National Library](#).

publicity seems to be well received. Its publicity output should be professionally managed.” It seems little had changed since AFC Commissioner and WP chair Peter Martin observed that NLA management “appeared extremely sensitive to honest staff appraisals of the problems of operating [the NFA in the NLA] and

...there appeared to be a very disturbing failure in the top management of the NLA to understand the special problems of the Film Section, or a failure to comprehend the extent to which the NLA’s reputation in this area had deteriorated.⁶⁶⁹

Healy and Martin were not alone. Others commented on the fact that the NLA Council’s committees did not meet often enough to achieve their goals, or provide democratic representation. They were dominated by the NLA, which was basically not interested in listening to them.

An **interviewee** commented on NLA’s conservatism and the fact that “Ray and Peter were outsiders, not part of the librarian clique. The NLA community resented change. Because they were acquiring material, Peter and Ray were out in that community and building up a support base.” Harrison Bryan’s view:

The people in charge of films were easily the most assertive of my colleagues. From the beginning Ray Edmondson took every opportunity to bypass his Branch Head. This was widely disapproved of and there was fairly general approbation throughout the Library any time Films were seen to ‘get their come uppance’. ([Appendix 7](#))

MANAGEMENT FACTORS

While the restrictive librarian qualification had been removed from NFA positions, staff numbers had grown little. There were now ten instead of the original seven. SR became a section in its own right but never grew beyond four staff. Meanwhile, workloads, access demand and collections had grown exponentially. Much of the collection was housed in an insecure and most unsuitable warehouse building. By 1982, unpopular

⁶⁶⁹ Letter to Public Service Board from Peter Martin, 14 April 1981

access restrictions became necessary. **Literature** adds that this was a time of turmoil for the NLA generally, adapting to computerisation, undoing the reorganisations of the Chandler years, and managing rocky relations with the wider library community. To this could be added the asbestos-related picketing of the NLA in 1983 and documented problems in staff morale.

Signs emerged of management's intent to curb further growth of NFA and SR establishments and begin dismantling them. SR lost its technical function, and instead of increasing permanent establishment, unskilled temporary staff were allocated to work on backlogs in SR and NFA. Centralisation of cataloguing for "special materials" was mooted.

NLA COUNCIL AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE NFA

The matter of the WP was resubmitted to NLA Council in December 1980. The NFAAC first convened in December 1981, over two years after WP had recommended its establishment. The NFAAC took its brief at face value, setting its own schedule and doing its own research, including visiting an overseas archive.⁶⁷⁰ It discovered that the Council expected it to behave like its other committees (that is, meeting annually and avoiding contentious advice). **Literature:** An input to NFAAC's deliberations was the NLA-funded Jeavons report, which concluded that the NFA's attachment to the NLA was "unfortunate and destructive". At its first meeting with Council in June 1982, NFAAC expressed concern over functional duplication with AA, that NFA should be located, for practical reasons, to Sydney, that access was at crisis point, and that high staff turnover was linked to low pay and low status. It did not, at this point, favour NFA being separated from NLA.

⁶⁷⁰ Two members, at their own expense, visited the British National Film Archive.

Ultimately, NFAAC's deliberations led to a two-stage research study, the Nicholas Clark Report (NC) on the NFA's developmental needs, the stages funded respectively by AFC and NLA. NC recommended a continuation of the status quo with a small staff increase. On the evidence, NFAAC concluded the NLA had acted in bad faith by pre-ordaining NC's outcome. It urged rejection because the consultants had not fulfilled their terms of reference. One NFAAC member, Pat Lovell, resigned, and the still-secret NC was leaked. It quickly became the focus of media and political attention. Having lost faith in the NLA, the NFAAC now considered autonomy for the NFA the only way forward and advised Council to encourage it. Council rejected this advice, arguing that the NFA could never be expected to grow very large, and warned against entrusting the NFA to any 'vested interest'. The Minister, in turn, noted the Council's advice but was not persuaded by it. The NFA's constituency decisively rejected NC, once made aware of it.

INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY GROUPS, MEDIA

Media interest escalated with the publication of Fia Cumming's *Bulletin* article⁶⁷¹ on 16 August 1983. It proved the political beginning of the end game in the autonomy issue. Cumming wrote follow up articles. In September Pat Lovell pleaded on television for government action. A stream of articles, letters and editorials in a range of publications followed, primarily in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. Although publicly claiming it would be improper for it to do so, the NLA in fact ran a strong campaign to retain the NFA.

Literature: The 'pro-autonomy' community, while not centrally organised, acted cohesively. The AFI used its *Projections* newsletter to give a detailed account of the 12 September film industry conference which it organised, and followed through in the aftermath. Film industry newspaper *Filmnews* likewise gave in-depth coverage. IASA

⁶⁷¹ Cumming, "Film Rescued but Archive in Trouble."

Australia issued press releases, and the proposed “disciplining” of Peter Burgis in October got press and parliamentary attention. Peter Biskup’s general critique of the NLA⁶⁷², which attracted its own strong responses from the NLA, appeared just before the formal announcement of the NFSA’s creation on 5 April 1984. Numerous letters to Ministers came from both sides of the discussion.

POLITICAL FACTORS

As a result of the Cumming article, the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, and his chief advisor, Bob Hogg, became involved in August 1983, at the point where sustained media attention began. A writer and former television commentator, Arts Minister Barry Cohen related to the issues. ACT Senator Margaret Reid supported Peter Burgis, while AFI Chair, Senator David Hamer, pursued the issue of NFA’s autonomy relentlessly, unimpressed by NLA’s arguments. With Cabinet support, Hawke took the opportunity of his presence in the AFI Awards telecast on 25 September 1983 to make a non-specific announcement about the autonomy of the NFA.

Literature adds that Cohen acknowledged the key person in managing the issue to completion was Bob Hogg.⁶⁷³ Behind the scenes, Hogg’s grasp of the detail was complete⁶⁷⁴ and he marshalled political forces, against bureaucratic obstruction, to achieve the outcome determined by government. His attendance at the 12 September film industry conference on the NFA appears to have been solely in the role of observer, but the resolutions of the conference were obviously a template for the Cabinet decision which duly followed.

⁶⁷² Biskup, "Fierce Wrangle over Movie Treasure Trove."

⁶⁷³ Cohen, The Life of the Party.

⁶⁷⁴ I remark further on my own relationship with Hogg in Chapter 6

CONSULTANTS AND EXTERNAL ISSUES

The Jeavons consultancy⁶⁷⁵ in June 1981 provided an assessment by a FIAF colleague whose observations were consistent with Lindgren's advice to Harold White over a decade earlier. Two members of the NFAAC later visited Jeavons' archive in London, a major reference point of the time.

NC,⁶⁷⁶ on the rejection of which so much turned, was a very different affair. NFAAC approached it with good faith, assuming the NLA did also. The first stage proved poor value. Better was expected of the NLA-funded second stage. But doubts arose, as instead of researching industry views or analysing the work of the NFA, the consultants spent time with NLA management. The result was rejected by NFAAC and, it transpired, by everyone else in NFA's constituency, apart from the NLA and, possibly, the library community.

Literature suggests this as a classic case of a consultant being misused to endorse a decision already made by the client. Surprisingly, though, NC is also a poor piece of work. Conclusions and assertions lack supporting rationale or research. Some issues in the consultant's brief were not addressed at all.

RISK

An **interview** comment on the consequences of NFA and SR staying with the NLA was simple: they would have been subsumed.

⁶⁷⁵ Jeavons, "Some Observations of the National Film Archive of Australia."

⁶⁷⁶ Christopher Hall, Kiersten Schou and Nicholas Clark, Final Report to the Council of the National Library of Australia on Development Options for the National Film Archive (Woden, ACT: Nicholas Clark and Associates, 1983).

The NLA Council's ministerial submission on the NFA⁶⁷⁷ (it did not have the opportunity for comment on the late addition of SR) promised the NLA would give NFA whatever additional resources the government provided for it. It would be separated from the NFLC with its budget clearly identified. The membership of NFAAC would be "reviewed" to provide for a "wider representation of all the users of the Archive" (in other words, made compliant by removing the present group of troublemakers).

This approach presented no risk to the NLA. Once the issue was off the boil politically and there was, sooner or later, a new minister, staff numbers and budgets could be adjusted to suit NLA's other priorities. The NFAAC could be disbanded when opportune. The NFA, like SR, could be dismantled and subsumed over time to ensure the focus for protest was removed, or at least diffused. Unwelcome staff could be transferred, if they did not leave of their own accord. Perhaps to "general approbation" of NLA staff these attention-getting units would receive their "comeuppance". [Appendix 7](#)

Whether an angry constituency would have allowed NLA to implement such a scenario is questionable. If needs were unmet, agitation would not stop. Producers could remove material held on voluntary deposit. But NLA Council probably did not understand this. Convinced, as they were, that the fuss was being orchestrated by a self-serving group centred on the NFAAC, changing its membership would surely solve the problem. And such a propitious conjunction of pro-NFA politicians and journalists might never occur again.

As it was, **interviews** record that there was "tremendous excitement and a sense of promise for the future". Had people not lobbied the politicians who drove it, the separation might not have happened and the collection would never have got a fraction of the attention that it got as a separate institution. An **interview** added that the library community seemed to believe separation was unnecessary, and that in an institution lacking a solid legal base the collection would be vulnerable. To some extent history would prove them right, but that was not immediately apparent.

⁶⁷⁷ NLA *Annual Report* 1983-84 pp 102-104

Autonomy for the NFSA meant, initially, becoming a unit of the Department of Home Affairs and Environment (DHAE) in the “piranha pool of Canberra bureaucracies”⁶⁷⁸. On 5 April 1984, Minister Cohen announced this temporary arrangement pending enabling legislation, after an Advisory Committee had devised a detailed vision and road map for the new institution.⁶⁷⁹ In reply, Senator Kathy Martin, Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, warned of the risks to NFSA within the bureaucracy. These would, indeed, become apparent later, but it was not what elated constituents wanted to focus on. Whatever the risks, separation was better than leaving the NFSA in the grasp of a discredited NLA.

Once separate, the small institution discovered the myriad risks of setting up the framework of a new organisation without precedents to follow. NFSA needed to find accommodation, establish a public image, meld the corporate cultures of film and sound, provide services, meet heightened expectations, adapt to the culture of the DHAE, and generally demonstrate that the government had made the right decision. An **interviewee** saw it in terms of establishing a new discipline: “we were developing the art and science of sound and moving image archiving: things were being invented as we went along.” Perhaps the NFSA’s pioneering experience would mirror that of the CNL in the 1900s and CAO in the 1960s. In both cases they, too, would have a long wait for their legislation.

Literature reflects the fact that new institutions are established by such demergers. Sometimes creating a new organisation is a preferable way of addressing new goals, rather than trying to do it through an existing structure. Demergers can arise when an existing unit within a larger body has developed its own culture. Such new bodies tend to be led by “zealots” who must build political support, pass a survival threshold, demonstrate the necessity of the new body’s existence and remove threats to its

⁶⁷⁸ “Preserving Records [1].”

⁶⁷⁹ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, Time in Our Hands.

identity.⁶⁸⁰ They also need to be good “clock builders”, creating organisations which outlive their founders,⁶⁸¹ a salutary lesson from some film and sound archives overseas which had been built around dominant personalities.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Codes of ethics had a low profile in 1984, at least within the NLA. As public servants, all NLA employees except the Director General were implicitly subject to the Public Service code, a regime later made explicit in the Public Service Act of 1999. This situation, however, was rife with ethical complexity.

The value extolled by NLA at the time was loyalty to the NLA as employer, and personal loyalty to the Director General. This value was invoked in several contexts by Harrison Bryan⁶⁸² as being due from the staff, and even from the Minister. This notion is strongly reinforced in the **literature** by Borchardt.⁶⁸³ ‘Disloyal staff’ were labelled by NLA Council Chair Jim Forbes as “quislings”. Whether all members of the Council agreed with this simple loyalty rationale is open to question.⁶⁸⁴

On the other hand, the NLA is part of the Australian Public Service. To whom did a public servant owe the greatest loyalty? DHAE? Government? The people of Australia? The profession? Does loyalty to the integrity of collections override loyalty to an institution? As someone who had been directly asked by my Minister and the Prime

⁶⁸⁰ Anthony Downs, Inside Bureaucracy (Boston: Little, 1967).

⁶⁸¹ James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, Built to Last : Successful Habits of Visionary Companies (New York: HarperBusiness, 1994).

⁶⁸² Bryan, [Harrison Bryan Addresses National Library Staff]. Bryan, Harrison Bryan Interviewed by Peter Biskup. See also Appendix 7

⁶⁸³ Dietrich Borchardt, "Ethics of Librarianship," Alias: Australia's Library, Information and Archives Services: An Encyclopaedia of Practice and Practitioners, ed. Harrison Bryan (Sydney: Library Association of Australia, 1988).

⁶⁸⁴ Whyte, "Reflections on Some Problems,"

Minister's adviser to provide confidential advice about the NFSA, while also being employed by the NLA, I had a conflict of loyalties.

Literature suggests that librarians and archivists shy away from confrontation, and hence may respond to admonitions of loyalty from an authority figure. It also suggests that for public servants the issues are more complex. Colliver⁶⁸⁵ argues that professionals must take final responsibility for their actions, while Banks⁶⁸⁶ adds that blind loyalty to a system does not absolve an individual from questioning its fundamental assumptions.

The NLA Council arguably had a higher ethical obligation to its own Advisory Committee than to its paid consultant. Nevertheless, without NFAAC's knowledge it transmitted the NFAAC's confidential advice to Council on to the consultant himself, who in turn threatened legal action against NFAAC members. If this was standard practice, Council's other advisory committees would hardly have found it reassuring.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Perhaps the most disturbing legacy of these events is the prominence of NLA-promulgated conspiracy theories and mythology from late 1983 onwards. These hold that the NFA/SR separation was masterminded by an organised group intent on controlling the NFA, that it was done in an underhanded and improper way, that the NLA behaved ethically while its opponents did not, that protocol prevented the NLA from trying to influence public opinion while its opponents faced no such stricture. This group is referred to variously as "the film lobby", "vested interests", "sectional interests" and similar labels. "We had been rolled by experts" said Harrison Bryan.⁶⁸⁷ "There has

⁶⁸⁵ Spencer Colliver, "To Whom and for What? Exploring Further the Notion of 'Accountability' in the Public Service," *Private Values and Public Policy*, ed. Robert Banks (Canberra: Zadok Centre, 1983).

⁶⁸⁶ Robert Banks, "The Vocation of the Public Servant" *Private Values and Public Policy*, ed. Robert Banks (Canberra: Zadok Institute, 1983).

⁶⁸⁷ See [Appendix 7](#)

been a deliberate build up of adverse publicity and misinformation” claimed Judy Cannon.⁶⁸⁸ “Those who have lobbied so publicly and skilfully to take the film archive away have employed some of the best talents in their industries to those ends” thundered the Canberra Times.⁶⁸⁹

Significantly, these claims stop short of publicly naming individuals, but an analysis of the **literature**, including oral histories and personal papers in the NLA, suggests the individuals were variously believed to include AFC chair Philip Adams, Bob Hogg, Hazel Hawke, all the members of the NFAAC, staff members (myself, Mike Lynskey, Peter Burgis and perhaps others) and, less specifically, the AFI, “specialist film buffs” and “commercial concerns.” It is obvious that the NLA Council and members of the library community were convinced of the machinations of this “organised group”.⁶⁹⁰

While there was a popular movement, with individuals and organisations taking cues from each other, there is no evidence of any overall orchestration by an organised group. If such “vested interests” ever existed, it is unclear how they could “control” a public institution like the NFSA, or what they would gain by doing so. There was and is little commercial value *in* the NFSA collection as such. Commercial value subsists in the copyrights held by *external* parties, independently of physical possession of the collection. There was nothing in the subsequent structure and performance of the NFSA to suggest any malign external influence.

On the other hand, despite its claims of rectitude and propriety, it was the NLA itself that ran an orchestrated campaign, using the very media and lobbying techniques for which it denigrated its opponents. Even so, an **interviewee** recalled that, nearly a decade after the event, the conspiracy theories about nefarious dealings had, if anything, grown larger within the NLA’s corporate memory, and in **literature** Harrison Bryan’s

⁶⁸⁸ Cannon, “Film, Sound Archives in State of Siege.”

⁶⁸⁹ “Preserving Records [2],” Canberra Times 7 October 1983.

⁶⁹⁰ The NLA’s *Annual Report* 1983-84 mentions this *three* times: “specialist interests” (p. vi), “commercial interests” (p 3) “vested interests” (p 103). To add to the sense of conspiracy it evokes the asbestos scare, even suggesting the TLC picketing of the NLA was connected with these “interests”. “It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that this experience coloured some of the public reception to the newspaper controversy over the National Film Archive which erupted almost on the same day the picket was lifted.” (p 14).

memoirs of 1988 and of 1994 ([Appendices 7 and 9](#)) confirm this. It would be naive to imagine that these did not still persist by the time the NLA made a bid, in 2005, to recapture the sound function from the NFSA.

CONCLUSION

The **documentary**, **interview** and **literature** evidence divides into opposing views. One, embracing the broad constituency of NFA and SR, affirms the correctness of the government's decision to create the NFSA. The other, embracing NLA and parts of the broad library community, holds that these functions should have stayed with the NLA. There is no meeting point between these views, nor, it seems, on perceptions about the processes which were followed.

The NFAAC responded to what they, and their constituency, considered a doctored consultant's report. It was the last straw, the ultimate breach of faith. The Council's breach of protocol in transmitting the NFAAC's confidential advice to the consultant, resulting in the threat of legal action, would only have confirmed their judgment that the NLA could not be trusted. If there was "something very close to a crisis of confidence in the Library"⁶⁹¹ it had been repeatedly signaled in reports, commentary and complaints for fifteen years or more. That the Council could apparently accept the advice in NC, embrace conspiracy theories, and take the NLA's own publicity and mythology at face value, suggests the lack of confidence was amply justified.

So extreme does the NLA's behaviour seem, in retrospect, that one searches for an explanation beyond rationality that is rooted in its secretive, status-driven culture.⁶⁹² A level of fear, anxiety and irrationality seems to characterise the events not only of 1983-

⁶⁹¹ Bryan, [[Harrison Bryan Addresses National Library Staff](#)].

⁶⁹² Healy, [Review of Publicity/Public Relations Activity in the National Library](#).

84, but also the NLA's constant response to the NFA's autonomy and resourcing issues over a much longer period, during which the questions were repeatedly avoided, submerged or bought off with token measures. Finally, external forces required that they be faced.

Whatever one feels about his stance, Harrison Bryan, at the pinnacle of a distinguished career, faced a host of inherited administrative problems. In addition, he had to cope with the sequential crises of the asbestos dispute, the map curator's resignation, the funding for ABN, the NFA and SR separation and, later, the National Library fire. Yet others, too, had endured criticism⁶⁹³ and pressure arising from the NLA's failure to understand and heed past messages.

The events of 1983-84 were the logical outcome of a long story. For the proponents of autonomy, it had become clear that no adequate solution could be found inside the NLA, with its limited understanding of the audiovisual heritage. The course of events, however, turned on individuals in the right place at the right time.⁶⁹⁴ These included journalist Fia Cumming, Prime Minister Bob Hawke, Prime Ministerial Adviser Bob Hogg, Arts Minister Barry Cohen, Senator David Hamer, AFI CEO Kathleen Norris and, of course, the members of the NFAAC. They were no orchestrated "group", yet without them, there is no predicting how matters would have evolved. Had the critical moment passed, the NFAAC would have been changed or dismantled and "troublesome" staff moved. Media interest may have waned, and events like the film industry conference of 12 September 1983 would have receded into the past. Political patrons, too, move on.

⁶⁹³ For example, Mike Lynskey, Peter Burgis and I had to seek a public apology from the Canberra Times in response to imputations made in Judy Cannon's article of 16 November 1983. The apology, of course, was a tiny paragraph a week later which did not match the prominence of the original article. Cannon, "Film, Sound Archives in State of Siege."

⁶⁹⁴ The list would also have to include my Deputy, Mike Lynskey, whose political antennae were sharper than mine, and who shared with me the risks of briefing Fia Cumming for her critical *Bulletin* article of 16 August 1983.

For all that, if one is to believe the NLA's 1983-84 annual report, the subtraction of film and sound collections did not much matter to it:

On any real scale of importance, of course, these and other disturbances, however upsetting at the time, were trivial measured against the Library's continued provision of service at a high level, as a major custodian of the national heritage, as the country's largest bibliographical resource and as the nerve centre of the nation's library network.⁶⁹⁵

5.4 THE REBRANDING - 1999

INTRODUCTION

At a glittering ceremony on 21 June 1999, the NFSA was rebranded *ScreenSound Australia*. The change was announced, without warning, during the ceremony at which the Prime Minister, John Howard, opened the new extension to the NFSA's Acton headquarters. It quickly became clear, from public reaction and in other ways, that the change had been a mistake. Yet it was not reversed until December 2004, long after the NFSA had been merged with the AFC (see next turning point). In the meantime, the NFSA had to live with the unfolding consequences.

At a time when all the national collecting institutions were moving towards a standard nomenclature, with which NFSA already conformed, the rebranding took the institution in a different direction, distancing it from its peers, and sending an unhelpful message professionally. While technically its new 'formal' name, *National Collection of Screen and Sound*, later *National Screen and Sound Archive*, followed the formula, the dual branding idea never worked. The formal name was crowded out by the dominance of *ScreenSound Australia*.

⁶⁹⁵ National Library of Australia, [Annual Report 1983-84](#).

PEOPLE AND LEADERSHIP

The rebranding was driven by NFSA Director Ron Brent. The idea arose in mid-1997, congruently with the start of construction on the building extension, but no steps to progress it were taken until the re-establishment of the NFSA Advisory Council in May 1998. Despite the Council's initial reluctance, the process was driven with determination. Brent sought a decisive outcome without excessive rumination.

Keystone Corporate Positioning Pty Ltd were engaged to undertake a scoping study in November 1998, and re-engaged to do the main research study over February to May 1999. While several Keystone people were involved, principal Donna Meredith was the main liaison with NFSA. Brent and Meredith dominated the project. There was an internal steering committee, and the Council played a role in the early stages, but from the beginning there was little doubt about the objective of a new name. Minister Peter McGauran and Departmental Secretary Neville Stevens approved the new brand in May 1999.

Consultations with staff and stakeholders were led from the front by Keystone. They were hurried and, as **interviews** indicate, got, at best, ambivalent reactions. Stakeholder focus groups had little credibility: "[Keystone] knew what they wanted [the group] to say and did their damndest to make us say it. We never did. We couldn't accept their first premises..." Staff responded similarly: "I can't recall any proper market research being brought in to justify [their argument]."

Literature confirms that a rebranding exercise needs to be well planned, comprehensive and of sufficient duration. It does not necessarily involve renaming. It

may be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Potential benefits must be assessed, there needs to be clarity about what is being publicly signaled, and key stakeholders, including staff, need to understand and support the change. In the event, most of this advice was not followed.

PROFESSIONAL FACTORS

Keystone pressed their point of view in meetings and focus groups: **interviews** recalled the view being put strongly that the word ‘archive’ was old fashioned, the current name was too long and needed to be explained, but “I couldn’t recall any proper market research brought in to justify that argument”. On the contrary, it might address perceived local problems, but lose the international reputation and recognition of the name. On this, as on many other points, such as the move of the Sydney office to Fox Studios, Keystone’s views and conclusions proved to be wrong.

The **literature** notes the essentiality of building a “bridge” from an old to a new brand to retain brand equity. There are successful examples of this, such as the rebranding of “Darkie” toothpaste as “Darlie”, as well as unsuccessful ones. Careful research before *and* after is vital. The changes must be evaluated against their original goals, difficult as that might be, to avoid cynicism. The goals need to be defined by the organisation, not the consultant. An **interview** notes that a clear idea of where you are going is needed before getting consultants. “They help with the how, not the what. [Keystone] bought heavily into the what.”

No single document authoritatively defines the rationale and goals of the NFSA rebranding. Rather, they reside within a lengthy sequence of statements, reports, contracts and minutes⁶⁹⁶ (see [Appendix 8](#)). There was, therefore, no official reference

⁶⁹⁶ These reiterated claims that betrayed ignorance of the NFSA’s history or were recycled from earlier document. For example “Since its inception, the Archive has found difficulty in gaining recognition of its name, its logo

point from which staff could work in explaining the rationale for the change. In a sense, Keystone wrote its own brief. Its scoping study report was the principal information document for the main research project, for which it also won the tender. The project was notable for the absence of any clear, succinct statement of rationale and goals. An **interviewee** pointed out that it is desirable to do some research twelve months afterwards, but this was never done. Apart from the clear intention to change the institution's name, which was accomplished, there were no defined goals against which to evaluate the success or otherwise of the rebranding.

The new brand and logo remained secret until the day of announcement, so they were not road-tested beforehand. They were revealed to staff just before the launch ceremony on 21 June 1999. **Interviews** add that some were impressed by the event, others appalled at the cost, still others puzzled at the result: "We were scratching our heads: for all the effort that went into the launch, there was nothing to say how [the name and logo] were arrived at. It was just sort of dumped: here it is, cold and dripping on the table – go for it! There was no marketing strategy, it was just meant to be so great it would work." And surprise was not a good idea: an **interviewee** added that launching the name as a major event to surprise the world was unwise. It would have been better to float some names and get reactions.

MANAGEMENT FACTORS AND COUNCIL

For many, the process lacked credibility. **Interviews** doubted whether there had been any survey or research to establish whether branding or positioning needed to be reviewed. The debate never started at the beginning. Is a lighter, frothier name needed in the first place? Are people having problems with NFSA? It was just assumed this had

and an understanding of its vital role in preserving and presenting Australia's cultural heritage". At some points, such as with *Operation Newsreel* or *The Last Film Search* the NFSA's name achieved a very high profile – too high, in the view of some! Or again: "the logo, without a verbal or written context, does not engender awareness, recall, interest or a positive response." This was a very odd thing to claim for a logo that was not just a visual design but included the name of the institution.

to be done. Some saw it as a forgone conclusion: “I think they’re just lying to us because they’ve made up their minds. It will be top down”. The process engendered tensions, for “not everyone on the executive had an equal voice”. There was division between an old guard and a new guard.

Lacking experience in branding issues, the steering group deferred to the expertise of Keystone and, in any case, knew what was expected of it. **Literature** suggested that the tendency towards introversion and low self image revealed in studies of librarians and archivists had some application in the situation. Further, **literature** suggests that a useful template to analyse the group’s conduct is the theory of Groupthink,⁶⁹⁷ which holds that defective decision making arises when certain preconditions are present. These include insulation of the group, lack of a tradition of impartial leadership, and lack of methodical norms for decision making. This then leads to an incomplete survey of alternatives and objectives, failure to examine risks of preferred choice and reappraise rejected alternatives, poor information search, selective bias in processing the information at hand, and a failure to prepare contingency plans. Virtually all of these elements were present in the decision-making process.

Moreover, the rebranding study occurred at a vulnerable time. Most members of the revived Council had no previous connection either with the NFSA or collecting institutions, and were largely ignorant of the NFSA’s history. They looked to the Director for guidance. As the study proceeded they were managed to the sidelines. At the same time, staff were preoccupied with relocating into the new building extension. It was not a good time to also engage them in something as demanding and significant as a rebranding. **Interviews** note that the rebranding was a surprise; staff were focussed elsewhere. It seemed to happen quickly, and staff discussion was mostly at the top. From the new names suggested by staff it is clear that many did not take the subject seriously.

⁶⁹⁷ Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink : Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

The rebranding study was conceived as a marketing exercise. That is, as an exercise in identity and positioning in relation to the NFSA's users, customers and visitors. The **literature** asks: what is being signaled? What will be the reaction of competitors? Is the change about substance or merely about trappings? As **interviews** showed, many thought the new brand signaled a change in the *character* of the institution, since it did not sound like a museum or collecting agency. It did not have the gravitas of *National Film and Sound Archive*. It sounded like a sound recording studio. "It was obscure, laughable." The new brand ignored the NFSA's status as one of the national memory institutions, its international profile, its self explanatory title and mandate, and its professional character as defined in the descriptor 'archive'.

Five months after the launch, a KPMG audit revealed serious mismanagement of the project. There were missing records, unauthorised cost blowouts, lapses in due process, and not even a signed contract with Keystone. The full costs of the rebranding, estimated at \$1.8 million⁶⁹⁸ were, like the complaints, never published by the NFSA. The visible aspects, like the launch, concerned some stakeholders. **Interviewees** were appalled at the cost: "over inflated and totally inappropriate for a dignified professional service organisation....the money spent on rebranding could have been spent on things the Archive needed."

POLITICAL FACTORS

An **interviewee** recalls an expressed political imperative to move quickly and get things launched as quickly as possible: "a sense, certainly from the Director, that we'd been waiting a long time for this." The NFSA had to have a stronger profile, to prove it could be a bigger player. In the 1990s, every Government agency was rebranding and calling

⁶⁹⁸ This writer's estimate. An accurate accounting is impossible because only some of the costs were required to be publicly reported and even these are not always readily discernible in annual reports.

themselves ‘something Australia’. This imperative did not, however, seem to impact other memory institutions in the way it would impact NFSA.

From the outset, expectations of a name change were created, so a final outcome endorsing the status quo, or a minor tweaking of logos and styles, would have been unacceptable. As well as opening a building, the Prime Minister would announce a new brand, hence the secrecy before the event. There being no constraining legislation, the rebranding required only approval from the Departmental Secretary and the Minister. There is no record that either of them raised obvious questions about the haste, the wisdom or the logic of the change. Were stakeholders supportive? Was Keystone’s advice being calibrated against other sources? By the time the answers to such questions became clear *after* the event, an **interviewee** noted that for the Minister and Council, discussion on the failed rebranding was a taboo subject. There would be no backtracking and no evaluation.

Likewise, the move of NFSA’s Sydney office to Fox Studios became a political liability. An **interviewee** added “that was when the ScreenSound brand really started to have a bad smell....it aligned the Archive with the big business end of town: a real insult to the independents” who supported the institution. But the **literature** added perhaps the worst political embarrassment. The urgent audit report on the mismanagement of the project was done to protect the Minister⁶⁹⁹ who, in turn, had obtained the Prime Minister’s support for the rebranding. Now the Minister and the Secretary would be held accountable if the media discovered the mismanagement. Fortunately, they never did.

It is a cardinal rule for bureaucrats that you never embarrass your Minister or your Secretary. One can only speculate on the degree to which this experience bore on the NFSA’s subsequent loss of autonomy and eventual absorption by the AFC.

⁶⁹⁹ KPMG, ScreenSound Australia - Review of Keystone Corporate Positioning Consultancy. (Canberra, 2000).

INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY GROUPS, MEDIA

The new brand found few friends and attracted considerable derision. **Interviews** are replete with comments like “laughable”, “a nightmare”, “ridiculous”, “outraged”, “stupid”, “an assault on our identity and eminence”. While some **interviewees** had heard positive comments, one thought “the only people who saw a lot in the name ‘ScreenSound’ were other marketing consultants: our primary clients didn’t warm to it.” Likewise, in the **literature**, the brand found little support or credibility in the professional or popular media. While users of the NFSA had no choice but to adapt to the ‘ScreenSound’ brand, recurrent stories indicate that the rebranding was regarded as unwise.

There had not been a continuing advocacy group exclusively focussed on the NFSA after AFTA had achieved its objectives by the 1980s. In 2000 the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive (FNFSA) was formed, supported by several prominent patrons. It declared the institution had lost its way. Its initial aim, as its name suggested, was to achieve reinstatement of the NFSA’s original brand, but its wider purpose was to encourage the NFSA to re-engage with its stakeholders. **Interviewee:** “there was publicity and radio interviews; [on *Late Night Live*] Philip Adams began by saying when something is called ‘friends of’ it’s usually a euphemism for ‘enemy of’..... [the Friends] felt justified in being at odds with the institution: friends of an ideal, what the institution should be.”

Literature: the FNFSA newsletter quickly became both a lobbying medium and a journal of record of the NFSA’s tribulations. NFSA’s own official newsletter, redesigned after the launch of the new brand, was wisely titled *news from the archive* instead of ‘ScreenSound News’ or similar. It effusively welcomed and gave space to FNFSA. But as soon as FNFSA launched its own newsletter with an independent voice, *news from the archive* ignored the group, whose presence would soon prove crucial to the NFSA’s survival.

In February 2000, at the behest of ASDA, NFSA conducted a user survey on the rebranding and the Sydney office relocation. The results showed such antipathy to the new name that they were never published. FNFSa conducted its own survey, garnering similar results, duly transmitting these to the NFSA.

RISK

The **literature** demonstrates that rebranding is fraught with risk, and failures are numerous. Spectacular examples are the debacle of Consignia, which had to promptly revert to Post Office Group in the face of public ridicule, and the British Airways tail fin design, which led to traffic control problems and also had to be unwound. In other less-than-successful cases⁷⁰⁰ a new brand has been persisted with. Risk assessment is not a term widely used in the literature, but the process is implicit in the caution, detailed planning and analytical clarity that is urged in rebranding exercises, and in asking the question: what will happen if we don't make the change? If the answer is "not much", there may be no justification to proceed. Changes initiated by a CEO (such as British Airways) or a perceived need to update the image (Consignia, Aviva) are often unwise.

In the case of the NFSA, the implicit risks were multiplied as caution was thrown to the winds. The project was CEO-driven. It began with the presumption of a name change and a delivery deadline. It took a crash-or-crash-through approach, trusting that any residual problems could be sorted out after the event when the change was locked in. There are times when such an approach is appropriate, but this proved not to be one of them. As **interviews** attested, the process was expedient and too rushed, the research was inadequate, and the rationale was unclear. The secrecy, speed and surprise meant that stakeholders were neither aware nor supportive, and no partial alternatives to a complete makeover were researched. Nor was there consideration of a 'Plan B': that is, what to do if the change did not work. Such a precaution would have undermined the logic of the approach that was used.

⁷⁰⁰ Norwich Union into Aviva, National Film Theatre into bfi Southbank, KPMG Consulting into BearingPoint

Branding **literature** is largely based on the corporate world, relating companies successfully to their customer base. This one-dimensional approach is risky for non-profit institutions, which are only partially market driven. Other dimensions, like professional reputation and recognition, stakeholder relationships and professional nomenclature, are crucial parts of institutional identity. **Interviews** registered concern about this perspective, judging that Keystone were not in tune with the nature of the NFSA, had a strong barrow to push, and that their textbook corporate branding principles didn't necessarily apply. "There were a lot of things they basically didn't get." And there was, some felt, an opportunity missed. **Interviewees** felt rebranding was worth a try, because it might have worked had the process been done properly. Organisations need to be refreshed every so often. Perhaps 'film' needed to be replaced: *National Screen and Sound Archive* might be better.

A stated intent of the rebranding was to increase recognition of the institution. The **literature** emphasises the essentiality of transferring brand equity between old and new, even though the current corporate trend is away from descriptive brand names to more abstract ones. The name *National Film and Sound Archive* is timeless and self explanatory; the name *ScreenSound Australia* is not. The project offered no strategy for transferring existing brand equity, risking lost recognition. **Interviewees** agreed that the new name did not encapsulate what the institution did, it destroyed identity and, up to a certain point, credibility. "... for a name trying to capture modernity, how quickly it becomes old fashioned too...what's wrong with National Film and Sound Archive? You know what it is." It further transpired that the new brand was not unique, creating confusion with commercial sound studio Screensound Pty Ltd. The only advantage of the new brand was phonetic: "If nothing else, it rolls off the tongue. You may not like it. It didn't suit us, but it's certainly easier to say."

The political risk of the change was real, but difficult to assess. Had the rebranding worked, it would have stood the institution in good stead. But its failure embarrassed the Minister and the Secretary, and its mismanagement put both at risk. The fact that they, as well as the Council, walked away from an apparently insoluble problem,

ignoring follow-up evaluation yet unwilling to reverse the rebranding, reflected poorly on them as well as on the institution. Some **interviewees** felt that people started worrying about the name change rather than the real issue, the AFC takeover. It was a distraction when energy should have been somewhere else. It started a succession of events which led to the AFC takeover. “We learnt [in hindsight] that if you’re a small cultural agency it doesn’t help to have too much bad press.”

CONSULTANTS AND EXTERNAL ISSUES

It is not known how Keystone Corporate Positioning came to be selected for the project, since the relevant documentation is missing. It is clear from **literature** that there were sufficient irregularities to require the emergency audit, and ultimately to terminate the relationship, in part because of failure to present usable deliverables, including a marketing plan. Keystone’s performance was criticised in **interviews**: “Keystone were a disaster. [They] were heavily opposed to acronyms. Bad advice.... we used to call them Keystone Kops – they were very shmick. We’re quite a cumbersome beast and I think we were a bit daunting for them. I think they did what they thought they were supposed to be doing.”

But there was also a view that NFSA management did not know what it wanted. **Interviews** added that management were as clear about what they wanted, their hopes for a higher profile, as they were capable of being. But they were not clear internally about what that would involve. There were doubts about commitment to change, the “extreme conservatism” within NFSA. “If you want to change a position you need to change the culture.....rallying people behind the rationale wasn’t dealt with as comprehensively [as it should have been]”.

But as the **literature** makes clear, responsibility lay not with Keystone, but with management. It was management’s role to lead the process. It had to define the task,

select the consultant, accept or reject their advice, manage the relationship, specify the deliverables, and set the time frame. Keystone could argue that they delivered, under pressure, what was expected: a new brand and a high profile launch. But regardless of where responsibility lay, when measured against best practice in the literature the project seemed almost a textbook example of how *not* to conduct a rebranding.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The conduct of the rebranding raises issues about competence and probity. The KPMG audit dealt with some of these⁷⁰¹, but a larger question remains. Why was such an inadequately designed exercise, with such serious consequences, permitted and pursued in such a brief time frame and under such secrecy? The objective, a new brand, was pre-ordained and, once the process began, unavoidable. But, as the **documentation** shows, this fact was not admitted to staff or focus group members, thereby undermining objective and informed discussion on branding and positioning issues. Failure of the project was never admitted. Success was claimed on the grounds that the new name was being increasingly used.

The newsletter, *news from the archive*, ignored the complaint and controversy. Only the *Annual Review* makes passing mention of these, but implies that everything is under control. Promises to ASDA to reinstate the original name were made, but not carried out. Those with formal responsibility for the rebranding declined, in the end, to take responsibility for its consequences.

While Keystone's intellectual property lawyers were supposed to have cleared the new brand, they seemed to miss the existence of Screensound Pty Ltd. Yet the NFSA did nothing for two and a half years to resolve the conflict, and the disadvantage caused to a

⁷⁰¹ How satisfactorily is unclear, because under FOI only a heavily censored version of the audit report has been released.

small business which could not fight the bureaucracy. This left its owner “justifiably cynical”.

CONCLUSION

By the end of 2000, the NFSA had a new name but little else. The announced ScreenSound Foundation and business partnerships never arrived. Brand equity had been lost. The budget had been depleted and product sales went backwards. Confidence in the institution was shaken. Managing the consequences was a continuing distraction for the staff. Failure was not admitted and discussion effectively forbidden. Staff coped with the consequences as best they could. The great scheme to take the Archive “successfully into the 21st Century” turned out to be a house of cards which quickly collapsed.

The rebranding was an accident waiting to happen. Without enabling legislation or strong governance mechanisms, there were no checks and balances, and the NFSA’s very character was always vulnerable to political and bureaucratic whim. The fact that people got used to the new name over time neither confirmed that the change was an improvement, nor that it was welcomed. It simply confirmed that people had no choice.

The **literature**, with its warnings about the management and risks of rebranding, and about the proper selection and management of consultants, aligns with the **documentary** record. To a degree, the **interviews** offer some variant opinions – not everyone thought the rebranding was a disaster, nor that such an exercise was wrong in principle, or even that it was particularly rushed.

INTRODUCTION

In mid 2001, two years after the rebranding, the NFSA's situation within DCITA changed. It was reduced from a 'semi-autonomous institution' to an 'operational group'. It no longer produced a separate *Annual Review* for Parliamentary tabling but was incorporated in the Department's annual report as an 'outcome'. DCITA became intrusive in its management. The move towards Executive Agency status was abruptly halted.

On 11 December 2002, the Arts Minister, Richard Alston, announced a general review of cultural agencies. There were rumours of the NFSA being merged with another organisation. On 13 May 2003, the review's primary outcome was announced. The NFSA (then ScreenSound Australia) would be 'integrated' with a statutory authority, the AFC, effective 1 July 2003. The following morning Director Ron Brent called a staff meeting at which he also announced his own imminent departure. Transitional arrangements were rapid. Amendments to the AFC Act were introduced into Parliament for passage before 30 June. The outcome was a foregone conclusion. The Advisory Council was abolished on that date. On 1 July NFSA staff became employees of the AFC, and NFSA collections and other effects passed into AFC ownership.

PEOPLE, PERSONALITY TYPES AND LEADERSHIP

Apart from the Minister, Rod Kemp and the Departmental Secretary, Helen Williams, it is not known for certain who was responsible for the merger decision. It would have involved senior people in DCITA and, at some stage, the Chair and CEO of the AFC. It

definitively did not involve the NFSA's management and Advisory Council, and (so far as is known) its key stakeholders. Arts Minister Rod Kemp did alert one **interviewee** about the imminent decision, admitting that he didn't know whether it was a good idea but declaring "we've got to do something and we think this is the best thing to do."

Following the merger, leadership was quickly asserted by AFC CEO Kim Dalton and, on his behalf, his lieutenant Sabina Wynn. From July 2003 to August 2004, the NFSA was headed by an Acting Director reporting to Kim Dalton, but without personal access to the AFC Board, much less to the Minister. DCITA itself was now at arms' length from the NFSA. An ostensibly consultative review of the NFSA was instituted, and stakeholders gave the new arrangements the benefit of the doubt. An **interviewee** recalls the hope that AFC might get rid of DCITA's conservatism, make the NFSA more entrepreneurial, and be the closest realistic approach to statutory status. "Dalton seemed progressive, straight talking, forceful in a productive way – he'd fix problems, get a vision going, get rid of excessive bureaucratisation Dalton was eloquent, making commitments that mollified the Greens' concerns. "

But it was soon clear that the AFC had its own agenda, and considered 'consultation' a euphemism for 'agreement'. The definitive breach with stakeholders occurred in December 2003, when the AFC released its *Directions* plan and signaled the removal of most of the NFSA's senior staff.⁷⁰² The response from stakeholders and media was forceful and immediate: **interviews** recount personal interactions with an intemperate and accusatory Dalton who then and thereafter adopted the approach of aggressively criticising his perceived critics.

⁷⁰² Australian Film Commission, Stage 2 Directions Paper.

PROFESSIONAL FACTORS AND BRANDING

The effects were devastating. **Interviews** recount “it was Sydney versus Canberra. Canberra people were parochial, ignorant, country bumpkins. [By contrast] AFC staff were extremely professional, very condescending, [and had] total lack of respect for individuals and the organisation. They dismantled programs. They didn’t give reasons. Many people left. Senior people jumped before they thought they were going to lose their jobs. It gave the Archive a poor name and earned the pity of other institutions.” And again: “they were ill equipped. They didn’t have the financial expertise. The Archive was setting world’s best practice and they set about trying to destroy it...they didn’t really want to learn. They saw the sort of sexy public face, access services, and the online delivery as the one thing they wanted, and they were prepared to slice that off and sent it to William Street.”

One **interviewee** offered an apologia, adopting a cautious optimism at the beginning because it was a done deal. “I think Kim genuinely felt the relationship was worthwhile, but his understanding of the Archive was very limited. It was there to support the industry by storing and looking after its films and doing a bit of access and exhibition. No big picture stuff. Totally short sighted.”

Literature: In *Directions*, the AFC had proposed the name Australian Film and Sound Archive. But in December 2004, after much stakeholder lobbying, the AFC quietly dropped ScreenSound Australia and restored the original National Film and Sound Archive brand. There was no formal announcement. The change provoked little attention and was quickly assimilated, as if everyone was glad to see at least this piece of normality returned. **Interviews** recall the AFC listening to passionate, vocal, active supporters of the Archive and the original name, probably more passionate than those supporting the new name. But there was a sting in the tail. **Interviews** noted that changing the name back didn’t help when the Archive lost its email and internet address

and was subsumed into the AFC. When used in public, the name had to be followed by the postscript ‘a division of the AFC’, spelt out in full. “It seemed their way of having a trophy on the wall.”

MANAGEMENT FACTORS AND COUNCIL

This was a classic example of a top-down, government decreed hostile takeover as described in the **literature**. Prior cultural due diligence is not a feature of such events. Adjustments and consequences are strictly post facto issues. **Interviewees** believed that Dalton had been given a brief to “get the Archive moving, get rid of dead wood” but that his understanding of the NFSA was very limited. “They used the Archive as a sort of preservation and stock footage area. They’d use its facilities without acknowledgement, as if it was a factory.”

Documents: The merger announcement came as a surprise to the NFSA Advisory Council, which had not been consulted. Some months earlier, the Director, Ron Brent, had become aware of a “strong push from senior people in DCITA to move the NFSA out”, irrespective of whether it was moved to a better structure. He was consulted on the possibility of moving it under the AFC, and responded with an email citing “thirteen significant problems” that this would create, including loss of identity, confusion due to the different character of the two bodies, and the absence of sound in the AFC’s name, legislative role and experience. He heard no more and assumed his warning had been heeded, until the merger was announced.

Underlining the secrecy of the process, the Government refused to publish the terms of reference or the report of the Review of cultural institutions, designating them “Cabinet in Confidence”. Beyond claims of ‘synergies’ between NFSA and AFC, no philosophy or rationale for the merger was offered. The NFSA’s former Minister, Peter McGauran,

expounded that the decision had involved much “thought and contemplation” of the implications, taking into account the relationships with key stakeholders, and the benefits to the constituencies of both organisations. Yet those same stakeholders and constituents had been kept in ignorance of the process.

DCITA’s “strong push” to shed the NFSA apparently precluded pursuing statutory authority legislation, or even resolving the roadblock towards Executive Agency status. It opted for what MP Michael Organ termed a “quick and dirty solution” to get the NFSA off its hands by the end of the financial year.

The costs of the merger, never detailed, were clearly significant. They included the merger of IT and other systems, extra bureaucracy and the physical relocation of the NFSA’s Sydney and Melbourne offices. The NFSA and AFC budgets were amalgamated. There were indications that NFSA was the loser, but the quantum could not be established because of the accounting methods used. **Literature** indicates a multitude of reasons that, in the commercial sector, mergers actually diminish the value of an enterprise and fail to produce claimed synergies.

POLITICAL FACTORS

Documents: The Parliamentary debate in May-June 2003 exceeded the length of all previous discussion on the NFSA in quantity, if not quality. The Government staunchly supported the amendments to the AFC Act. The Opposition acquiesced, but with significant misgivings. It was the Greens, and in particular Michael Organ MP, himself a qualified archivist, who clearly foresaw the disaster ahead. His speech summarised past government failures and enumerated the flaws in the legislation.⁷⁰³ He was supported

⁷⁰³ Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 June 2003 pp 15914-15916

by Labor's Senator Kate Lundy, in whose electorate the NFSA was located, and who tabled several crucial provisos as the price of Labor's support.⁷⁰⁴

In time, virtually all the agreed safeguards and promises made by the Government were broken by the AFC, as an **interviewee** recalls. But for Lundy, Organ and others the immediate political turning point came, as it did for other stakeholders, with the release of *Directions* on 12 December. At a public rally outside the NFSA the following day, Lundy launched a petition. The outcry which followed forced Minister Kemp to contradict some of the AFC's intentions. The scene was set for an extended confrontation, in which one of the regular battlegrounds would be the thrice-yearly Senate Estimates Committee hearings.

As a bureaucratic device, there are advantages in passing a problem organisation from one master to another. By ridding itself of the NFSA, DCITA no longer had to respond to complaints about the rebranding or other failures. For its part, the AFC could honestly say that such problems did not occur on its watch, and disclaim responsibility.

INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY GROUPS, MEDIA

To a degree not seen before or since, the media rallied on 12 December in the NFSA's defence. For a whole week, until Minister Kemp's partial capitulation, the *Canberra Times* and its arts editor, Helen Musa, made the NFSA daily front page news. It covered the issue from every journalistic angle: leading articles, opinion pieces, even editorial cartoons. Canberra-based ABC radio joined in, interviewing Kim Dalton and drawing attention to his bureaucratic gobbledygook, as also did columnist Crispin Hull.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁴ Hansard, Senate, 26 June 2003, pp 12264-12266

⁷⁰⁵ Hull, "Why Don't Bureaucrats Like Kim Dalton Say What They Mean?."

Stakeholders learned indirectly that the protests had profoundly worried the Minister and the AFC Board, who had not expected a memory institution to attract such prominent support. It was useful knowledge.

Two advocacy groups in particular, the FNFSA and the newly formed Archive Forum (AF), led the ongoing protest over the AFC's depredations on the NFSA. Without this, the AFC's hand would not have been stayed and the NFSA may have become too damaged to recover. **Interviews:** "I was very proud of what AF did and the way it worked". There were fraught meetings with Kim Dalton and others. "I think he genuinely could not understand what we were on about. He just thought we were pigheaded." There was a view that the AFC's brief had been gradually whittled away, and so it needed the NFSA, which attracted unambiguous industry and constituency support. FNFSA and AF swung behind a single message. The NFSA has "always been quite clever in how we manage our politicians. We look at both government and opposition.... walk down the straight line, not insulting either side, and it's paid off."

The 2004 conference organised by FNFSA and ASA on the future of the NFSA "was quite a significant event" adds an **interviewee**. "It built public support... and encouraged the AFC to just be a bit careful about how it was handling the Archive."

RISK

The **literature** comments that in the commercial world, up to eighty per cent of mergers fail, for reasons that include mismatch in culture, history, size, strategic fit and poor integration. The expected synergies do not emerge. For government bodies, the joining of unwilling partners can leave unresolved issues hanging on for years, while none of the promised benefits are realised. In this case the inherent risks of failure were considerable, made worse by the ignorance and heavy handed implementation of the AFC. **Interviews** recall that the AFC was a small policy and financing institution of 40

people which took over a large 220 person archive machine with shops, cafes, factories, collections to manage. "They were totally ill equipped...I'd see people come out of meetings looking very upset and they'd be devastated again and again. It was terrible. Being yelled at, told 'we're sick of discussion. Just get used to it.'" There was constant risk of skill depletion as some people refused to work under such a regime "but the people I knew were going to stay, come hell or high water."

The risk of physical and organisational integration increased as time passed.

Interviews: "The AFC didn't have a wonderful reputation.... I think the AFC was trying to integrate the Archive so it could not be easily removed, giving the AFC permanency, stability and security in an unstable funding environment. There were questions circulating like 'what does the AFC do as an expensive development body? It could easily be done by the FFC..."

While there were many risks to the programs and corporate skill base of the NFSA, the greatest risk was to the survival of the NFSA itself, as a structure and an institutional concept. The amended AFC Act recognised only enhanced functions. It did not recognise the NFSA as an entity, nor indeed any entity dedicated to archiving. The AFC's clear intention was to reduce the NFSA to a backroom technical and warehouse operation, while all the public and presentational activities were distributed elsewhere around the AFC. This would also reduce the dramatic difference in size between the NFSA and AFC.

Interviewee: "It was clear all significant public programs would be taken over by the AFC, particularly Sabina Wynn's little empire, and I argued that such an archive is a warehouse with no future.... the AFC was a temporary organisation while an archive is meant to be permanent, with the security of its own legislation."

Therein lay a further risk. If the AFC was abolished, what would happen to the NFSA? If, for any reason, the AFC Amendment Bill had failed to clear Parliament by 30 June, the NFSA's future would, at best, have been uncertain. It would have continued as an

‘operational group’ pro tem, but having decided to relinquish NFSA to some, indeed any, new owner, a thwarted and angry DCITA would no doubt have found a way to do so. A merger with the NLA would almost certainly have been an obvious option.

CONSULTANTS AND EXTERNAL ISSUES

The AFC was a heavy user of consultants. For example, the bill for ‘change management’ consultants to smooth the merger ran into six figures. Since its prescription was that the NFSA would have to change to conform to the much smaller AFC, never the opposite, these were futile and time consuming efforts. The **literature** points out that consultants come in different guises with different levels of effectiveness. The writer encountered some of those hired by the AFC, and interprets the lack of **interview** comment on them to align with his own opinion, that their effect on improving the NFSA-AFC relationship was negligible.

Directions reads like the report of a poorly informed consultant, even though it is believed to have been an in-house project largely authored by Sabina Wynn. In its many omissions and its assertions without supporting evidence, it is eerily reminiscent of the Nicholas Clark (NC) report of 1983. Like NC it deprecates existing staff, makes unsupported and unstated assumptions and does not offer options. There is only a single way forward. It also makes a point of deprecating its respected predecessor *Time in our hands*. Commentators dismissed it and AF produced an extensive rebuttal which received wide circulation.⁷⁰⁶ Dalton backed *Directions*, declaring it to be “thoughtful and rigorous”.

Nevertheless, *Directions* was imposed as the agenda for a round of by-invitation ‘stakeholder forums’ in four cities. Chaired by a hired facilitator, they were orchestrated

⁷⁰⁶ Archive Forum, [Cinderella Betrayed: The Shoe Won't Fit](#).

affairs which probably did the AFC more harm than good. An **interviewee** recalls one of the Canberra forums as “foredoomed to have a bad outcome for the AFC..... one of the worst run functions I’ve ever attended. A complete farce. The facilitator seemed to know nothing about the subject and had no qualifications for being there.” At the Melbourne forum there was “a vote of no confidence from the audience” against the AFC.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The AFC comprehensively disregarded ministerial promises and instructions. Its annual reports offer little connection with the reality experienced by NFSA staff and stakeholders. It used its power of patronage to coerce dependent organisations into supporting its stances on the NFSA. It attacked and defamed its perceived critics. It obliged NFSA staff to sign letters to editors and similar documents defending the AFC. **Interviews** note that “the AFC responded to things in [letters columns]... the tragedy is that they would get [NFSA staff] to write some of those letters to respond to the Friends and ... they were forced to defend an iniquitous situation” ...and much more, although other interview comments were judged to be too defamatory to include in this thesis. At the heart of the AFC’s work was a perceived conflict of interest. An **interviewee** considered that production funding and archiving are competitors. They did not mix.

The seeds of the AFC’s approach can be seen in the careful obfuscations of its original 13 May 2003 press releases announcing the merger, and claiming this was the first time legislation recognised the preservation of screen and sound material. The implication was that NFSA was being recognised in legislation, when in fact only the *functions* were being recognised. It intimated that NFSA was about back-room activities, not front-of-house ones.

CONCLUSION

With the exception of some publications, such as AFC annual reports and ministerial press releases, the **documentary**, **interview** and **literature** evidence generally aligns.

The view from the AFC and the Minister's office is of course different, at least until the post-Dalton phase of the NFSA's tenure in the AFC.

Was there a chain of events linking the rebranding failure, DCITA's subsequent intrusion into the NFSA's management, its demotion from institution to operational group status, and DCITA's decision to pass it off, so to speak, to the first willing recipient? Did the AFC, in turn, see an opportunity to bolster its own reputation and budget, and to better secure its own future? There is circumstantial evidence for this, and the transaction benefited both DCITA and the AFC at the time. The fact that the NFSA also had its identity confused by a contentious name - a theme that runs through the parliamentary debate - also made it easier, and more palatable to stakeholders, to avoid specific mention of an archival entity in the amended AFC Act. The documented evidence, if it exists, will not be accessible until 2023 at the earliest, when Cabinet-in-Confidence documents from 2003 are released.

The question of whether or not the merger was in the best interests of the NFSA and the public good does not, *prima facie*, appear to have been a consideration among the decision makers. In any event, it was not an issue deemed worthy of discussion with those most directly affected. **Interviewees** considered "my overall feeling about the AFC is one of betrayal....of trust, of support. They'd seriously misjudged their constituency....whether it was Kemp's idea, or Dalton's, or someone in the Liberal party, or a departmental initiative, it sucked".

INTRODUCTION

On 12 February 2004, Senator Kate Lundy called a press conference outside the NFSA to announce the Labor Party's commitment to establishing the NFSA as a statutory authority when it came to government. An election was due later in the year.

AF, FNFSa, ASA and other advocacy groups were very active in the months following. AF organised a petition signed by eminent Australians, newsletters and press releases flowed, a conference on the NFSA's future was organised, media attention was maintained, and there were hopes for a change of government at the election in October. It did not happen. The Coalition was re-elected. Stakeholders faced the prospect of a long haul until the next election in 2007. It was the moment of decision: give up, or carry on?

PEOPLE, PERSONALITY TYPES AND LEADERSHIP

In September 2004 the NFSA gained a new Director, Paolo Cherchi Usai, a film archivist of international reputation. Appointed by the AFC, he was nevertheless the first head of the NFSA who was not a career bureaucrat. His tenure would be marked by its own controversies, but he was a credible figure whose views merited attention by the AFC Board, when he could get access to it in Dalton's company. With a strongly orthodox FIAF background, his views about keeping the NFSA intact mirrored those of the advocacy groups, and an effective relationship ensued.

In January 2006, Dalton unexpectedly resigned from the AFC. There was a thaw in relations between the AFC Board and stakeholder groups and a more cooperative modus operandi developed. AF, FNFSa and the others nonetheless reiterated that their objective of statutory independence for NFSa remained.

PROFESSIONAL FACTORS

In September 2005, the NLA approached Dalton with a proposition that it take over the NFSa's sound function. Dalton did not immediately reject the overture and possibly saw advantages in the prospect. The Minister, however, when approached by the chair of AF, Chris Puplick, was not attracted by the prospect of another 2003-style public campaign, and the idea went no further. Dalton issued a denial, claiming that the rumours had been invented by stakeholders, but the **documentary** record confirmed otherwise.

MANAGEMENT FACTORS AND COUNCIL

The AFC established a committee representative of stakeholders to advise the Director, who chaired it. Its agenda was circumscribed and it was a poor substitute for the former ministerially-appointed Advisory Council. But it was better than nothing, and its members had formal access to staff and discussion on the internal operations of the NFSa.

POLITICAL FACTORS

In the long haul, it was persistent contact with politicians and the raising of questions at every Senate Estimates Hearing that told the Minister the NFSa issue was not going to

go away. The AFC's broken promises were continuously raised. It did not so much matter that, in the manner of these forums, the answers were often obfuscatory or stonewalling. It was their persistence that mattered. It also helped to keep the Opposition focussed on Lundy's 2004 commitment and to stay the AFC's *Directions*-inspired hand. It was a battle of attrition.

Following the change of government in November 2007, the new Arts Minister, Peter Garrett, moved quickly to fulfil Lundy's commitment, and Opposition support ensured passage of the NFSA Bill through the Senate. Rapid negotiations involving stakeholder groups assisted in disentangling NFSA and AFC assets prior to passage of the legislation. The NFSA Act received royal assent on 23 March 2008 and took effect on 1 July 2008.

INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY GROUPS, MEDIA

The AFC imposed complete control over media access by its staff. Not even the NFSA Director could talk to the media without the permission of AFC minders in Sydney. Lacking the AFC's resources, advocacy groups nevertheless had no such strictures. A media presence was maintained by the main groups – AF, FNFSa, ASA and AHA - who increasingly acted in concert. An important achievement was a lengthy joint policy statement issued in July 2006,⁷⁰⁷ documenting past broken promises, demonstrating why the NFSA-AFC marriage could never work, and propounding the intellectual case for statutory status for the NFSA. It went to every federal politician and the media, and during the year leading up to the 2007 election it helped to keep Labor focussed on its promises.

⁷⁰⁷ Archive Forum, Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive, Australian Society of Archivists and Australian Historical Association, "Independent Statutory Authority Status for the National Film and Sound Archive," (Canberra: 2006), vol.

RISK

For the advocacy groups, the risk was always one of exhaustion and despair about ever reaching their goal. That the campaign persisted for as long as necessary was in itself a major achievement. Without it, it is hard to imagine that the NFSA Act would ever have been passed.

The risk of losing skills and memory was a besetting problem during the AFC years. It required determination and optimism for staff members to stay on at the NFSA, and not everyone did. The NFSA that gained its independence in 2008 was a depleted organisation. It had gone backwards financially, and people it could not afford to lose had left. The rebuilding would take time.

There was the risk that, having achieved election, the new government would not follow through on its promise, or would delay it in the face of more urgent priorities. In hindsight, had legislation been delayed even a year, the global financial crisis would have gained centre stage. In that climate the creation of a new national collecting institution, with its attendant costs, would hardly have been high on the government's agenda.

When it was clear that the government was indeed following through, there was a risk that the split of assets between NFSA and AFC would be inequitable. During the negotiations, which also involved FNFS and AF, an interviewee recalled that "the AFC chair and acting CEO handled the transition smoothly and competently. I think they were really aware that things had gone seriously awry under the Dalton regime....it was not an easy thing to undo the work of the AFC years. There was cautious acknowledgement that ...Dalton may not have been acting entirely appropriately on all occasions. Sabina Wynn disappeared before the transition."

Probably two factors got the NFSA through the window in time. The first was that the legislation was simple, and helped a new Government and new Minister to get some quick runs on the proverbial board. The second was pressure from the film industry to quickly move on the legislation for Screen Australia, unfinished business from the previous government. Delay was holding back investors in several new productions. The two new Acts passed through in tandem, and the NFSA's nemesis, the AFC, disappeared into the merger that created the new funding body.

CONCLUSION

Interview: "We applauded the Act. Once again the industry was totally united and totally opposed to the AFC's mismanagement of the Archive. Total unmitigated disaster. It was lovely wondering what the future would hold... exciting, positive and a long time coming."

Yet it was a close run thing. Ironically, if the AFC had been a more competent and sympathetic organisation, had the government honoured its promises to reform AFC Board membership, had the AFC itself been willing to change, had the NFSA generally prospered under the umbrella of a benign and wise overlord, the issue of statutory independence may never have come to the top of the agenda. The NFSA may have continued as part of the AFC or later, Screen Australia, and its fundamental vulnerability would not have been exposed until, perhaps, some other crisis revealed it.

**In life, there are many things that you'd like to walk
past and not notice. Lots. But sometimes you do
notice and when you notice, you have to do
something. Well, I have noticed some things, and I
have tried not to walk past.**

Petro Georgiou MP, valedictory speech in the House of
Representatives, 3 June 2010.

6.1 INTRODUCTION: WHY THE NFSA EMERGED – AND WHY IT TOOK SO LONG

The path to identity for the NFSA in some ways parallels that of other collecting institutions, both state and national. Initial moves in Parliament, arising out of common national and cultural aspirations, face some years of challenge on economic and practical grounds, and perhaps changes of government. Eventually a case is accepted and budgets, statutes and buildings follow, though not necessarily in that order. But the duration of the NFSA's path was unusually long, and made more difficult by its uniqueness within Australia and the need to create its own professional culture and methods.

The emergence of the film archive in the twentieth century was a response to new media and its 'transience and inferiority', with a recognition that moving images were a significant medium of popular culture, education and art. The growth in broadcasting and sound recording technology enhanced the spread of ideas and culture. Their preservation required new, complex, and sometimes urgent, measures specific to the industries and technologies that created them. The separation of the NFSA from the NLA occurred at a time when the existence of dedicated institutions in both the film and sound fields had become a normal aspiration, and when their shared characteristics were becoming apparent to curators. The expectations of a reinvigorated film industry and the network of sound collectors were critical forces underlying the case for a national film archive and an institute for recorded sound.

For libraries and librarians the twentieth century challenge was to establish a profession, raise the standards of libraries, face the implications of machine-readable and computer technologies, and the emergence of the information age and information science. In this context, the moving image and sound recording were seen as a form of

information: proxy books in a field led by an older generation of 'bookmen'. The multi-faceted nature of the audiovisual media – as art, entertainment, popular culture, industry and artefact – was, however, not part of this worldview.

In one sense it is puzzling why the development of film and sound collections, begun so perceptively in 1935, was not embraced and promoted thereafter as a point of distinction and difference in the NLA's struggle to establish a unique identity among Australian libraries. The absence of objective and even handed management of film and sound archives, and the NLA's indifference to professional and curatorial standards in these fields, was at odds with its aim to be of good standing among the world's national libraries, some of which house notable audiovisual archives. Instead, these areas operated uneasily at the periphery of the NLA's activities, with decades of neglect followed by attempts to squeeze them into moulds they could not fit. The explanation seems to lie in the corporate culture of the NLA which, after its half century of stewardship, unwillingly bequeathed a diminished heritage to the NFSA. Its behaviour, with its elements of fear, irrationality and conspiracy theories, might be viewed as a kind of corporate paranoia, if clinical descriptions can be stretched that far.

In its first two decades as a separate institution, attached to a sequence of government departments, the NFSA was not led by experienced audiovisual archivists, but by career bureaucrats without curatorial backgrounds. While the institution was still developing its professional frames of reference, it had exchanged the bookish culture of the NLA for the overarching managerialist culture of the Department. In that setting, the lack of legislation and of curatorial wisdom among decision makers led to an ill-advised rebranding, followed by abandonment of the NFSA to an unsuitable new host, the AFC.

As with the NLA, it is puzzling why the AFC did not celebrate and build up the NFSA, rather than set about dismantling it and alienating its supporters. Its disastrous record as a steward of the national heritage offered the strongest possible argument for NFSA

statutory independence. It is hard to imagine a more effective demonstration of public advocacy to compensate for a failure of policy and governance.

In all these situations, individuals made their mark, subverting or enlarging their mandate, displaying egotism or altruism, and demonstrating at critical points a confrontational approach which, with community support aroused, led to further degrees of separation and clearer identity. In a memory institution, the collection, surrounded by the knowledge and skills of its custodians, is the basis of its existence and provides the foundation for its ethical practices. Where governance or ethics fail, the survival of memory depends on the people – the friends and the community the institution serves.

There are many “what ifs” in the NFSA’s story. What if the CNL Film Division had gained autonomy in the 1950s? What if the NLA had conscientiously built up its film and sound archival work in the decades that followed? What if the NFSA had gained its legislation in 1986, as was intended? What if the rebranding had never happened? What if the AFC had been a supportive steward of the NFSA instead of a destructive one? But we can only deal with what *did* happen.

The research question asked:

What were the historical factors that made the emergence of the NFSA so erratic and protracted? What were the effects and risks and how were they dealt with? What were the broader consequences? What lessons may be learned?

The following answers are offered.

NLA PERIOD

World War II marked a hiatus point between the beginning of the NHFR and the resumption of business post-war as the FD. The early impetus and exclusive focus on preservation was lost, as was the potential to evolve this activity strategically as a defining characteristic of the CNL. From 1945 onward, the work of the burgeoning 16mm lending library dominated. How the FD might have developed had it gained its autonomy following the Paton Committee in 1957 remains an intriguing speculation. Within the culture of a well supported film operation attuned to changing cultural demands, and supported by a state-based network of film libraries, the archival aspect may well have grown more rapidly over the next decade or so than it would within the NLA, where anomalous attachment “for the time being” equaled another twenty-seven post-Paton years.

For its entire life up to 1984, the ‘glamour section’ faced the problem, in Rod Wallace’s words, of “never being quite *in the Library*”. The FD was a self-contained operation, with its own methods and clientele. It was generally not led by librarians. Of necessity it had an enviably large budget, justifiable in terms of user reach. The film lending operation was by far the NLA’s most heavily used and most cost effective service, and demand expanded every year.⁷⁰⁸ For Harold White it had political value, and it added to the aggregate size of the growing NLA. Yet it was a poor fit in a research library where the audiovisual media lacked status, and would never be the top priority.

⁷⁰⁸ Measured by total audience numbers divided by films lent.

Perhaps largely due to contemporary attitudes, there was no such user pressure on the FD's Historical Collection. To develop it on the lines conceived for the NHFR, and in step with subsequent FIAF norms, would have required sustained leadership from White's level. It was not forthcoming. By the time the NFA staff unit was established in 1973, its skills development was some thirty years behind film archives in comparable countries, and it was virtually bereft of equipment and infrastructure. It would never come close to catching up while it remained part of NLA.

If anything, it was even worse for SR. Post-war, the field received no serious attention by the NLA until external groups got it onto the institution's agenda. It appointed a sound recording consultant, Peter Burgis, in 1971 and brought him on staff to the Music Section in 1974. By then it was already too late to save a large part of Australia's radio heritage, in the process of being discarded apace by redundant program libraries. Even so, it would take several more years for the NLA to structurally recognise sound recordings in their own right, rather than as a subset of Music.

A major element in the sequence of events was the internal culture of the NLA. Its standard response to the reports, complaints, meetings and development pressures from the mid-1970s onward was to fend them off, rather than openly grapple with the issues and opportunities towards an amicable and responsible outcome. Instead, what management saw were two relatively minor sections becoming the focus of much external attention, trying to jump the queue for resources and profile, and therefore needing to conform and be put back in their place. There was a general discomfort with the audiovisual world and its populist character. The NLA's resort to conspiracy theories in the face of lost credibility seemed consistent with an apparent inability to comprehend the scope and scale of the issues in question. In the grand scheme of things, although the loss of NFA and SR may not have really mattered much to the NLA, the loss

of face, and the precedent-setting danger that ‘more important’ things might be detached, certainly did.⁷⁰⁹

Turning points in history are sometimes the result of the right people being in the right place at the right time. Surveying all of the key personalities involved, it seems this was one of those times.

DEPARTMENTAL PERIOD

A week is a long time in politics. Ministers change and departments morph into new combinations. Patrons move on. What the Hawke government clearly intended as a two or three year sojourn in DHAE, en route to statutory authority status, lasted nineteen years without achieving that goal. Instead the NFSA slipped backwards into the clutches of another authority.

During those years the NFSA developed from a fragile entity into a substantial and well equipped institution that caught up with, and in some ways surpassed, its peers overseas.

Yet the lack of legislation was always a serious impediment. The basis for the NFSA’s governance and philosophy was ready by late 1985.⁷¹⁰ Although there were repeated attempts to progress legislation, various political and bureaucratic circumstances meant the times were never propitious. Accordingly, the NFSA lacked the anchor of an enabling Act, and the accountability and control of a governing board. The void was partially filled by a discontinuous Advisory Committee/ Council which steadily declined in

⁷⁰⁹ With some logic, the Rex Nan Kivell paintings were coveted by the NGA.

⁷¹⁰ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, Time in Our Hands.

expertise and effectiveness. Beyond that, the fortunes of the NFSA were in the hands of a Director, always a career bureaucrat accountable to the Departmental Secretary.

The resulting managerialist approach set up the NFSA structurally, but it led into dangerous waters curatorially, such as the colour film crisis and the resulting COMAT project, the large scale deletion of overseas collection material, and especially the 1999 rebranding and its aftermath. While direct causation cannot be established, in the sequence of events there is an almost fatalistic sense of slippage from the rebranding failure to DCITA's final disposal of the NFSA to the AFC as the first willing recipient. The legacy of the rebranding, a disputed name, runs like a thread through the parliamentary debate, and exquisitely precludes the inclusion of a named archival entity in the amended AFC Act.

The rebranding demonstrated that the NFSA had lost touch with its constituency, and the establishment of FNFSA in 2000 would, in a sense, take up where AFTA left off and provide a rallying point for stakeholders that was shortly to prove crucial to the NFSA's survival.

AFC PERIOD

Within six months of assuming control, the AFC had demonstrated its unfitness as a steward of the NFSA. Its obvious intention, with the government's blessing, was to dismantle the institution, and the only defence against such an action would be sustained public pressure. Given the AFC's intolerant and aggressive approach and its disregard of promises made by government, there was no alternative but to confront its intentions. Action lay entirely in the hands of the advocacy groups, the media and the federal Labor opposition, which announced that on winning government it would demerge the NFSA from the AFC and make it a statutory authority in its own right.

An initial campaign was aimed at the 2004 federal election. Since the Coalition was returned to office, the campaign had to be sustained with the 2007 election in view.⁷¹¹ It was, and when the government changed it honoured its promise. The NFSA Act the following year was the result.

6.3 EFFECTS AND RISKS

The period prior to the splitting of the NFSA from NLA involved many risks. A previous attempt at autonomy in the 1950s had resulted in the removal of its proponent from office. With the NLA and the library community ranged against them, would the NFAAC, the AFC, the AFI and other supporters see the issue through to the end? Would Bob Hogg, the Prime Minister and the Arts Minister also follow through? Would the government make the right provision for the NFSA? Would the NLA resist or acquiesce? The NFA's community had to trust that autonomy was the right objective and that all concerned would sustain their involvement. Going from a known, the NLA, to an unknown, a bureaucratic interim arrangement followed by legislation, was a risk. Yet such was the loss of trust in the NLA that leaving NFA and SR in its hands was no longer an alternative. Whatever the pitfalls, separation was the only acceptable path.

Post-1984, the failure to gain legislation when expected was an ongoing risk. While the NFSA stayed in the fluid departmental environment, governance was inadequate, it lacked a legal personality, and its security and continuity as an entity was always uncertain. This was not without precedent. The CNL and AA had operated for decades without enabling legislation. Until the NFSA's Act was achieved, it was a matter of just getting on with the business of running the institution. But the colour film crisis of 1989 raised serious doubts about the NFSA's competence, and therefore whether it should be

⁷¹¹ Puplick, Being Heard: Achieving an Effective Arts Advocacy. Puplick, Being Heard: Achieving an Effective Arts Advocacy.

remerged with the NLA. Then the rebranding of 1999 showed the vulnerability of the NFSA's identity and character to bureaucratic or ministerial whim. It was unclear how the rebranding could be reversed, since those in authority declined to correct the problem. The final act of bureaucratic irresponsibility was the transfer of the NFSA to the AFC, without the NFSA's prior knowledge, consultation or consent.

The risks to the NFSA's survival within the AFC were apparent from its amended Act, and worst fears were realised once the AFC's approach to its stewardship became clear. The merger was intended to be permanent, and the NFSA would disappear in any identifiable institutional form. The threat could only be averted through a complete reversal of government policy. Only the advocacy groups could potentially achieve this if they could cohere and strategise around the single objective of statutory authority status, which they did.

There was, finally, a risk that the incoming government in 2007 would not keep its promise. Or, if it did, whether an Opposition-controlled Senate would allow it to.

At many times during the NFSA's history, individuals had to decide what personal risks to take. For public servants, this entailed confronting the might of the NLA, the bureaucracy or the AFC, and the risks, including loss of employment and reputation, were very real. For supporters in the audiovisual industries, dependent on grants or investment by government bodies such as the AFC, there were similar threats to livelihood and professional standing. There were both clear and suspected instances of the power of patronage being exercised.

6.4 BROADER CONSEQUENCES

A primary consequence of the NFSA's slow emergence has been the impoverishment of the national audiovisual heritage. Its full extent is impossible to quantify. Every country has its own particular circumstances which affect the survival of films, tapes and discs in private, commercial or institutional hands. One can only infer from known instances of loss or of opportunities missed. In doing so, old assertions must be seen in context. For example, the NLA's claim that it preserved early Australian films when no one else was interested may contain an element of truth. But it can equally be argued that it did too little, too late, that it poorly copied and negligently destroyed original material, and that it inhibited the possibility of other bodies doing a better job. An indicative list of losses and missed opportunities is at [Appendix 11](#).

The awkward splitting of responsibility for audiovisual heritage between NFSA and NAA may never have happened had the NFSA come into existence, say, a decade earlier. The rivalry between NLA and AA, which was so apparent in the late 1970s prior to the passage of the Archives Bill, together with the unwillingness or inability of the NLA to respond to the technically dubious arguments advanced at the time, all but ensured this outcome and has led to a bifurcated development.

A further consequence of the NFSA's erratic emergence has been the stunting of leadership growth. Since separation from the NLA, the NFSA has not yet produced a Director or CEO that has been a product of its own culture. During the Departmental years, the directors were career bureaucrats within the managerialist tradition who never assimilated into the global audiovisual archiving profession. After the AFC merger, they were individuals with relevant curatorial backgrounds and reputations, appointed from overseas. Until the NFSA can produce a CEO from within, its stature will be incomplete. Yet the NFSA's global reputation and position as a leading audiovisual archive has been built through its standards, the quality and reputations of its own staff,

and their involvement in international professional forums. The NFSA was very much the proverbial country cousin when created in 1984. Having achieved room to grow, that status is long past. It is a global leader now. It has mentored and fostered other archives in the Asia Pacific region.

Perhaps perversely, the protracted confrontations with overarching authority – never sought, but always faced when they happened – have given the NFSA a legacy of resilience, independent thinking and achievement through grass roots support from advocacy groups, to a degree that is possibly unique among memory institutions in Australia. It may be a supreme irony that it was the NLA's intransigence which brought about the joining of NFA and SR to create a separate institution echoing the rationale of its 1935 predecessor, something which no one seemed to notice at the time. Again, it was the AFC's very arrogance and incompetence which demonstrated the essentiality of statutory independence for the NFSA.

It may be the result of an attenuated and sometimes tumultuous story, but it is my observation, and that of some longstanding NFSA colleagues, that informed knowledge of their corporate history is generally low among current NFSA staff. Perhaps the same can be said of other memory institutions, too,⁷¹² but the NFSA is the only institution of its type within Australia. If knowing how you came to be what you are, and how issues were tackled in the past, is a source of strength for an institution, it is not a strength that is being drawn upon. It may reflect a kind of internal inferiority complex yet to be overcome. While there remain a handful of individuals on staff with long corporate memories, they are nearing retirement age. Meanwhile, natural growth, the churn of staff and council, committee or board members over the years, the prevalence of mythology, the perspectives of successive 'owners' of the institution, and the absence of a detailed and unexpurgated corporate history has meant a lack of reference points. These are needed to build an informed appreciation of the NFSA's story, and its reason for existence. The present document, hopefully, partially addresses that need.

⁷¹² See the conclusion to section 2.3

6.5 DUTY OF CARE – SPECIFIC EFFECTS

Who is accountable for the safekeeping and good management of the national heritage, as represented by the memory institutions created by Parliament? Formally, this responsibility is devolved to the governing boards or councils of these institutions, under the terms of their respective Acts. For non-statutory bodies which are part of the bureaucracy, accountability passes from the relevant minister to the Departmental Secretary. All of these exercise a *duty of care*⁷¹³ over the heritage under their responsibility.

How well the CNL and NLA exercised its duty of care for the national audiovisual heritage during the half century of its custodianship would make for a lengthy discussion. Leaving aside the case presented by O'Hara in 1951 and the subsequent neglect of film and sound archiving, the most pertinent issue is how the NLA responded to the recurring calls for adequate resourcing and autonomy for the NFA and SR, as raised, for example, in reports from 1974 onwards.⁷¹⁴ Whatever the resulting actions or inaction, the one response that never happened was serious consideration, on its merits, of the option being proposed: whether, in fact, a separate institution might be a better way forward for the audiovisual heritage. That consideration had to happen outside the NLA, and ultimately contradict it.

The rebranding of the NFSA in 1999 was proposed by its Director, approved by the Departmental Secretary and the Minister. The proposal and its timing implied obvious questions. Was it wise to act in such haste? Why should the NFSA to move away from a standard branding formula when the other memory institutions were moving *towards*

⁷¹³ Meant in the generalised common law sense, rather than as a precise legal formulation

⁷¹⁴ Principally, in order: Jerzy Toeplitz's advice to the NLA Council (1974), the Edmondson report (1974), the AFC Working Party Report (1980), the Jeavons report (1982), the Nicholas Clark and NFAAC reports (1983)

standardisation? Were stakeholders supportive of the change? In the absence of legislation, would it be detrimental to the NFSA's mission, professional standing and existing image? Was there hard evidence for the claimed confusion with NAA? Was Keystone's advice being calibrated against other knowledgeable sources? These would seem to be responsible tests for the proposal. There is no evidence that they asked any such questions before the event. When the answers became clear *after* the event, neither the Minister nor the Secretary moved to protect the NFSA by reviewing or reversing the change, or otherwise restoring the NFSA's position. The problem was ignored.

Despite the government's claims to the contrary, the transfer of the NFSA from DCITA to the AFC showed no evidence whatsoever of the claimed "thought and contemplation" about the implications. It seemed merely a quick fix for a bureaucratic or political problem, in which consultation with both the NFSA and stakeholders was deliberately avoided. To so thoughtlessly merge such philosophically incompatible organisations, on terms so disadvantageous to the NFSA that it amounted to a hostile takeover by the AFC, and to imperil the future of the NFSA by subjecting it to a temporary organisation bereft of archival expertise, was a betrayal of decades of devoted work by staff and stakeholders. It was an act of irresponsibility towards the national heritage for which the Secretary and the Minister were formally responsible. In turn, the Board of the AFC was collectively responsible for the way in which its CEO, Kim Dalton, managed the NFSA for nearly three years. They must be presumed to have endorsed his approach, for no commissioners spoke out against it or resigned, and they are therefore accountable for it.

These events share three characteristics. Firstly, those responsible never admitted fault nor apologised for mistakes, not did they pay any price for neglecting their duty of care. Secondly, media spin was used by which the relevant authority sought to defend itself and attack its critics. Thirdly, achieving a solution involved a public confrontation by

advocacy groups, exposure in the media and debate in Parliament. It is difficult to see that, on any of these occasions, confrontation could have been avoided.

6.6 LESSONS

The lessons of the NFSA's experience are not unique, but the uneven development of the institution gives them a particular edge.

To partly borrow a phrase, eternal vigilance is the price of preservation. The bureaucratic and political landscape can change quickly. The official guardians of the national heritage and its custodial institutions cannot unfailingly be relied upon to fulfil their duty of care. Nor, when they fail, can they be easily brought to account. The system is not self-correcting. Ultimately, cultural institutions are public property and national treasures, and there is a wider duty of cultural stewardship shared among those who create the content of collections, those who curate and preserve them, and those who use them. The ways of expressing this stewardship will vary, but it will include the support and advice of professional and advocacy groups, and when necessary may require their open and persistent dissent.

The identity and values of each institution arises from its unique purpose and reason for existence, for which knowledge of corporate history, and of the institution's place in the professional universe, is essential. An institution unsure of its own identity is in no position to rely on a consultant to provide it with one. It follows that the institutional brand and name is an asset to be fully understood and valued, and not lightly altered.

Hubris is a constant institutional danger. Canberra-centrism, becoming deaf to the constituency, over-sensitivity to criticism, media spin, the invocation of 'loyalty' and

criticism of one's critics may all be signs of an institution expecting the world to fit its own frame of reference, rather than the opposite. It is hard to listen, to cultivate the media and the Minister, to be frank about failures and to learn from them.

Transparency and accountability are essential to mitigate mistakes, incompetence and hidden agendas. In Australia, the appointment of board members to national institutions remains an opaque process in the gift of ministers, rather than a more open system where, for example, qualified individuals can apply to be appointed to boards. Where transparency is limited, stakeholders may have to step in.

A legislative base, or its equivalent, and a legal personality is indispensable to an institution's security, identity, accountability and continuity. It is the essential reference point for good governance and good management. It counterbalances the tendency for institutions to be built around dominant personalities or passing circumstances. It provides assurance for those who donate and deposit collection material. They are dealing with a legal entity which can be called to account. It is the guarantee of autonomy, both administrative and curatorial.

Mergers and demergers, wise or unwise, are a fact of life. There are no immortal institutions. Unlike banks, no cultural institutions are too big to fail, or be unmade. What can take decades of effort to create can also be quickly unmade by the stroke of a bureaucratic pen. What can be instantly imposed without wisdom or consultation can cause years of hardship and loss. Legislation is a safeguard against political whim or precipitate action, but no institution can afford to rest on its laurels.

We have diverse institutions, like libraries, archives, museums and galleries, because diversity is also a fact of life, and different institutional structures, professions and worldviews are necessary to fully cater for the curatorial and access needs of the

cultural heritage. Australia has many cultural institutions but only one national audiovisual archive. It is hard to establish a new institutional concept, but the NFSA, which has the distinction of surviving the domination of three different institutional and bureaucratic cultures, has demonstrated the resilience and validity of the independent audiovisual archive concept. There remains the unfinished task of cementing the cultural credibility and status of the audiovisual media itself, as record, art and heritage.

6.7 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

In coming to the conclusion of this study, I have reflected on how well I have managed the subjective aspect of the exercise – my personal participation in the chronology since December 1968 – while endeavouring to maintain an objective view and interpretation of the course of events.

The selection of events in the chronology reflects those points of progression that have seemed significant to me in the NFSA's story. The major transition points are, I think, obvious. An institutional history could have been based on other things, such as the growth of the collection, management systems, public activities, scientific and technical advances in the field of audiovisual archiving, or the personalities which, at various levels, have shaped the expertise and reputation of the institution. But it is the political history, the emergence of the institutional concept, and the critical turning points which have shaped survival, growth, ethos and continuity, which have provided a framework for everything else. It is a truism that the most fundamental condition for the survival of audiovisual collections is not science, skills or good management. It is institutional security and continuity.

For everything that happened before 1969 I am an external observer. I am reliant, in the main, on published evidence, as well as on oral histories and personal papers already in the collections of the NLA. To the extent that I was personally acquainted with any of the players of that period, my view has been informed, perhaps subtly, by that familiarity. After 1968, I had available the same published evidence and FOI possibilities that would be accessible to any researcher. The additional evidential dimension was my large collection of personal papers which contain unique unpublished material, and which could not have been separately assembled by any other researcher. Like any such collection, the content is by definition both arbitrary and incomplete, even though it was deliberately compiled over time to provide as complete a historical record as possible. Recently I collaborated in the creation of a joint oral history on the NFSA's AFC period to ensure the capturing of recent memory before it grew dim.⁷¹⁵

The oral histories recorded for this project were an essential complement to other records, capturing unique evidence. The use of a third party interviewer was my response to the question of objectivity. Interviewees knew their comments were being recorded for my use, so they were indirectly speaking to me, but Ms Russell was able to put her own questions and lead the interviews from the viewpoint of a dispassionate outsider. The selection of interviewees was not done by me alone, but in discussion with my supervisor, and hence, again, with the input of an objective outsider.

While I clearly played an active leadership role in the NFSA's story, I have chosen, as far as practicable, to minimise my own overt presence in the course of events. I have tried to let the events speak for themselves, and where appropriate to record the

⁷¹⁵ In October 2008, separately from this project and at our own initiative and expense, Chris Puplick (former AF Chair and current Chair of the NFSA Board), Andrew Pike (former FNFSa President and current member of the NFSA Board) and I made a four hour video recording to capture our collective recollections of the AFC period, from 2003 to 2008. The intention was to guard against the fading of our own memories. The recording is deposited in the NFSA and is embargoed for our lifetimes, although by mutual agreement I have made occasional references to it in this thesis.

constructions, both negative and positive, which other people placed on my actions⁷¹⁶. While the thesis is autoethnographical I have tried to avoid making it too autobiographical.

PERSONAL TURNING POINTS

Nevertheless, for the sake of context, some personal recollection is necessary.

I joined the NLA in 1968 because I was interested in its film work. While I was initially assigned to the post of reference librarian for the NFLC, I also found myself in charge of the Historical Collection. Lacking technical expertise, I trained myself. I chose to stay in the FD as a specialist, rather than rotate to other NLA areas, or become part of the social and professional milieu of librarians. I learned that some fellow staff members thought the FD should not be part of the NLA, and that being 'buried' there was not an astute career move. In gaining external funding for my 1973 study tour I received no encouragement from management, where the project seemed to be interpreted as more of a problem than an opportunity. The advice that I had "damaged my career" through the recommendations in the Edmondson Report was no idle threat. I learned that dissidents were not encouraged in the Public Service.

A personal moment of decision came around July 1983 when a film industry colleague, whose name I do not remember, bluntly told me that the time had come for me to stop being a faceless public servant, and nail my colours to the mast. The community needed to know my stance about the NFA's future. Fia Cumming's *Bulletin* article was the direct outcome, and my point of no return.

⁷¹⁶ Among the positive constructions: Barry Cohen called me the 'moving spirit behind the NFSA's creation' (Cohen, [The Life of the Party](#).) and NFSA Director Ron Brent styled me 'a guiding father' (News from the archive #2, 2001). Over the years I have received a number of lifetime achievement and other awards from professional associations, as well as the Medal of the Order of Australia. Some negative constructions will be found in [Appendix 7](#) and also in Chapters 3 and 4. These reflect external assessments of my role in the NFSA's development.

In the early years of the NFSA, perhaps my most satisfying experience was the drafting of *Time in our hands* and various other policy documents and reports which had a lasting effect. I exchanged the position of Director of NLA FD for that of Deputy Director of NFSA which, after its early structure settled down, was an unsatisfying off-line role. It was only after the colour film crisis of 1989 that the structure was remade, and I regained line responsibility for most of the NFSA's activities until my retirement in 2001. After that I was free to be active in advocacy. I consider my involvement in FNFSa, and especially AF, were significant in achieving the NFSA's final independence.

In view of Ron Brent's role as driver of the rebranding (Chapter 3), I should add for completeness that our relationship was never an easy one. We had different visions of the NFSA and different approaches to management. The tensions were known to staff, who perceived that I was often bypassed, and told me so. Around May 1998, when first proposing the rebranding, Brent suggested I should take a package and leave⁷¹⁷. After the rebranding went sour, this became an ultimatum: support the new brand or go. My departure from the NFSA in April 2001 was, in part, a consequence.

The other part of the equation was that, in the true spirit of "clock building", I had worked myself out of job.⁷¹⁸ The NFSA had become a well developed institution, running as I felt it should, in which my presence on staff was no longer necessary. I had by now developed international commitments in the profession, and also judged that I could be more help to the NFSA from outside rather than inside.

⁷¹⁷ At the time, there was financial encouragement in the Service to avail of early retirement at age 55.

⁷¹⁸ Collins and Porras, Built to Last : Successful Habits of Visionary Companies.

ETHICS, DEFAMATION AND LOYALTY

A related issue is the question of personal ethics.

In the course of research I discovered much defamatory comment by senior NLA people and others relating to myself and my colleagues, mainly in connection with the split from the NLA in 1984. The imputations had no factual basis, although this thesis is not the place to respond to them. In my opinion, the comments were revelatory of personalities and institutional culture at the time. Examples have been included in the text because they respond to the research question.

Like other professionals, I faced many ethical dilemmas without precedents to follow. In such circumstances, one tries to act in good conscience. I considered my primary motivation had to be the well-being and survival of the audiovisual heritage, and I think the course of events has vindicated that motivation. A case in point was my contact with the Prime Minister's senior advisor, Bob Hogg, beginning in September 1983. He told me the PM had given him Fia Cumming's article of 16 August ⁷¹⁹ and instructed him to "do something about the NFA". He had subsequently attended the AFI-organised industry conference on 12 September. Since I had already taken a public stand, he felt it appropriate to talk to me.⁷²⁰ He asked me to provide confidential briefing information about the needs of NFA and SR and the practicalities of managing film and sound archives.⁷²¹ The ethical dilemma was, in effect, whether to obey or ignore a confidential request from the Prime Minister. I chose to obey it. Making regular trips across to the Prime Minister's office, then in the Old Parliament House, to deliver my papers to Hogg felt like living in a cloak-and-dagger movie. In the course of research, it has become

⁷¹⁹ Cumming, "Film Rescued but Archive in Trouble."

⁷²⁰ Initially, Hogg phoned my deputy, Mike Lynskey, who had also made his position publicly clear in Fia Cumming's article. Lynskey relayed the conversation to me, and I had to confess I had never heard of Hogg. I knew I needed to take the responsibility of continuing contact with him onto myself, and phoned him back.

⁷²¹ Copies of these advices have been retained in my personal papers.

clear, both from extant documents and what may be inferred from them, that the NLA was simultaneously providing advice to the Department and the Minister that it did not want me or my colleagues to know about.

In my experience, the concept of loyalty has been used all too often as a bludgeon, for the imposition of an ego, or as a means of control in the place of principles and rationality. There are enough examples of this in the NFSA's story. I have tried to follow the principles set out by Colliver⁷²² and Banks⁷²³. Professionals must take final responsibility for their actions. Blind loyalty to a system, or an institution, does not absolve an individual from questioning its fundamental assumptions.

My personal views about the need for NFA autonomy were first articulated, in context, in the Edmondson report, and presented, on balance, as the preferable avenue for the adequate development of the work, not as an end in itself. This did no more than reflect the FIAF norm, and had as much to do with identity as with operational practicality. I never resiled from those views, which have been vindicated by subsequent events, though as a manager with a large NLA section to run, neither did I go around publicly promoting them to all and sundry. Like Rod Wallace, and perhaps unlike John O'Hara, I tried to work within the system. When asked, within the confidentiality of the NFAAC or a meeting with the AFC's Peter Martin, at which Harrison Bryan was present, to express my professional opinion on the subject of autonomy and the NFA's future, I did so frankly and honestly.⁷²⁴ I expressed that opinion publicly when finally, and correctly, I was challenged by a film industry colleague that the time had come to do so. I can offer no satisfactory explanation for the NLA's consistently adverse reaction to the NFA and

⁷²² Colliver, "To Whom and for What? Exploring Further the Notion of 'Accountability' in the Public Service."

⁷²³ Banks, "The Vocation of the Public Servant ".

⁷²⁴ Bryan seemed to interpret these comments as a disloyal public statement.

SR autonomy issue⁷²⁵. It fell to Harrison Bryan to be the Director General in office when the question inexorably came to a head, but his inconsistent stances in his dealings with me and the NFAAC, and the distorted recollections in his published writings and oral history, need to be recognised as such and tested against the factual record.

ON DISCERNING ROLES

Whatever label and spread of responsibilities attached to my position from time to time, I think my principal contribution to the institution was developing vision for the NFSA which has proved valid and sustainable. But I learned that visions repel as well as attract, and that I had to discern and accept my appropriate role at different stages in the story.

The NLA, DCITA and the AFC each eventually cast me in the role of Machiavellian villain and troublemaker, an inflamer of lobby groups and a wielder of imagined political influence on everyone from the Prime Minister down. None seemed to understand that the reality was much more prosaic. While I have either dealt with or been active in the sequence of advocacy groups and committees supporting the NFSA and its predecessor, I never led any of them. They were chaired by prominent and strong minded people who had convictions of their own about the national audiovisual heritage and its management.⁷²⁶ While they were good colleagues who were glad to listen to my information and opinions, they properly and politely made it clear that they would determine their own views on the issues. They had to be, and be seen to be, independent of NLA or NFSA staff. This is obvious from the surviving documentation.

⁷²⁵ So far as I can ascertain, the NLA did not oppose the separation from it of the Canberra Public Library Service in 1981, nor, much later, the separation of what is now the National Portrait Gallery. These seemed to be quite amicable affairs.

⁷²⁶ Joan Long AM was the chair of AFTA and, later, of the NFSAAC. Philip Budden OBE was Managing Director of Colorfilm Pty Ltd and chair of NFAAC. Andrew Pike OAM was Managing Director or Ronin Films, Founding Chair of NFSA and current Board member of NFSA.

For example, when the NFAAC first met in 1981 its chair, Phil Budden, immediately established these ground rules with me as a matter of integrity. Again, after I retired from NFSA and initiated the assembling of Archive Forum (AF), for which I could see a need, I was never its chair or its spokesperson. As other members quickly pointed out, AF and its message could not afford to be discounted as the mere supporters of a disgruntled former NFSA staff member. It had to be others, standing on their own reputations and convictions, who made the public statements, argued at meetings and did the lobbying. They were often better equipped than me to do these things. My role was to be the secretary, the communicator, the drafter of letters and statements. Whenever I expressed opinions publicly, I did so as an individual professional, not on behalf of any group.

RISK

The NFSA's story has been fraught with risk. Sometimes it has been calculated risk; more often, perhaps, it has been a launch out into the unknown. The monumental step of severing a fifty-year connection with the NLA and moving into the embrace of the bureaucracy, against the NLA's fierce opposition, entailed risks which I do not think any NFSA supporters thought much about at the time. There was considerable trust in people like Hogg, Hawke and Cohen to do the right thing by the NFSA, and some euphoria at actually achieving the apparently impossible.

It was not the fault of Cohen, Hawke or Hogg that the NFSA's legislation did not arrive, on cue, in late 1985.⁷²⁷ The NFSAAC was four or five months late in delivering its report, which included legislation parameters. Those missed months were possibly crucial, as political and economic circumstances changed in 1986, and the following year Barry

⁷²⁷ The NFSAAC was appointed in July 1984 and instructed by Barry Cohen to deliver its report within twelve months. Unfortunately, serious drafting of *Time in our hands* did not start until June 1985, after Graham Gilmour replaced Colin Pitson as NFSA Acting Director, and I was assigned to head a separate secretariat to support the NFSAAC's work.

Cohen lost his ministry. It was one of many occurrences which, like Murphy's Law, unfolded over the years to the NFSA's disadvantage, creating the conditions for accidents like the 1999 rebranding. What saved the NFSA, in such circumstances, were the actions of stakeholder groups. Yet, without the risks, there would have been no NFSA.

THE JOURNEY

The research of the last eight years has greatly enlarged my own understanding of the NFSA's history, dealt with much mythology and brought new evidence to light about some darker corners of the story. The practical legacy of the project has been the organisation of a mass of personal papers and audiovisual records into an orderly system, and an agreement with the NFSA for their progressive deposit in the national collection so they will be accessible to future researchers. This was a possibility I could not have entertained while the NFSA was still under the hostile control of the AFC. I have also dealt with a variety of people who were willing to participate in the oral history project, a task that for some was not easy. Where they have given permission, their recollections will enrich the research holdings of the NFSA and other institutions.

Among the many revelations, perhaps the starkest was the depth of the vilification and conspiracy theories surrounding the subtraction of the NFA and SR from the NLA in 1984, and the extent to which they were believed and promulgated by highly placed people. Delving into the history of the NLA, I questioned the mythology surrounding Sir Harold White's legacy, and concluded that his predecessor, Kenneth Binns, deserves re-evaluation.

It has been satisfying to document the story and to reflect that history has vindicated the creation and growth of the NFSA. It has left me in admiration of people who have

given of their time and substance to protect and nurture the institution, with no expectation of reward. The NFSA has not lacked its heroes and heroines, though most will receive little thanks or recognition. Nor, sadly, has it lacked those who failed in their duty of care. At the very least, I have attempted to put the record straight.

EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

My objectives, as set out in the opening reflections ([Appendix 4](#)) were as follows:

- (i) To explore the implications of an issue which seems not to be well understood in the field of cultural institutions, and to which AV archives, most of which lack defining legislation, could be extremely vulnerable. NFSA is one of the world's highest profile AV archives and is looked to as an exemplar, so it is important that the lessons be fully understood.
- (ii) To bring understanding and closure to restore the intellectual integrity of the NFSA and help reintegrate its corporate history; to do justice to staff and stakeholders whose questions have never been answered, and to add to the historical record. The NFSA, like other collecting institutions, exists to foster research as well as preservation, in this case into the audiovisual heritage of Australia. The NFSA, as a concept and an organisation, is itself part of that heritage as well as part of a wider profession. It needs to understand and find reassurance in its own history.
- (iii) To reflect on my personal role in the sequence of events, on the "what if's", on my responsibilities and the ethics of my choices, and on the ethical dilemmas of professionals when they find themselves facing the unacceptable.

Begun in August 2003, the scope of the project was initially confined to a study of the 1999 rebranding. It grew to cover a much larger ambit of the NFSA's history. In August 2003, the NFSA's merger with the AFC had just happened, and was still cautiously regarded by most stakeholders, myself included, as a positive development. By the time I wrote my opening reflections to this thesis, in July 2005, the battle lines between the AFC and the NFSA's supporters had long since been drawn, yet the achievement of statutory independence for the NFSA seemed a distant and receding dream. The enlarging scope of the project was a response both to unfolding events, and to a

realisation that what I had called the 'mistaken identity' syndrome of 1999 could only be properly understood as part of a much larger story.

Translated to the bigger canvas which emerged, I think these objectives have been achieved, pointing, as they do, to further avenues of enquiry which I hope are followed.

6.8 FURTHER RESEARCH

1 This project has uncovered numerous avenues of potential research on the history of the NLA and the library profession. In this project it has been possible to use only a small amount of discovered material which was relevant to the theme, but the source documents exist for a comprehensive political, cultural and administrative history of the institution (as distinct from a history and celebration of the NLA collections). A particular area of interest would be an analysis of the NLA's internal culture and psychology, during the respective Harold White, Alan Fleming, George Chandler and Harrison Bryan eras. It would also be beneficial to re-evaluate the contribution of Kenneth Binns to the development of the NLA.

2 The NHFR deserves attention as a research subject in its own right. There is clearly much more needing to be discovered about its genesis, and the content and the ultimate fate of its collection. This is a vital part of the history of the NFSA.

3 Equally vital is an adequate history of the NLA Sound Recording Section and associated Music Section, from the beginning of Peter Burgis' consultancy engagement in 1971 until the creation of the NFSA in 1984. This topic needs more in-depth research attention than I have been able to give it in this project. So much of the evidence for the NLA period is drawn from unpublished material in my personal papers, where the SR

coverage is relatively thin, compared to the FD activities in which I had day-to-day involvement.

4 To my knowledge, the history of the national network of government 16mm film distribution libraries has received virtually no research attention, yet it was a remarkable phenomenon whose influence on Australian society from the 1930s to the 1980s was extraordinarily far reaching. It is a story that complements the NFSA and the commercial film industry. Many essential documentary records may be disappearing and many key personalities are no longer alive.

5 A complement to this thesis would be a conventional corporate history of the NFSA, including the development of its collections, its methodologies, its international influence and its key personalities.

6 The history of the Australian Institute of Anatomy, in whose building the NFSA now resides, is part of the story of Australian science and of a young national capital. It does not appear to have been the object of a major research project.

7 In view of the circumstances in which the earliest parts of the NFA collection were reduction-copied to 16mm, up to about 1970, a study on the technical quality and condition of these elements is needed to flesh out scanty collection and cataloguing records, so that the archaeology of this part of the NFSA collection is documented and fully understood. Contemporary collection records need to be put in order and gaps filled.

8 A study of the comparative experience of audiovisual archives which are part of major libraries, document archives, media funding bodies and the bureaucracy,

exploring both the limitations and advantages bestowed on them by their subordinate status. This would be a difficult and sensitive subject to research because of the inherent politics, but the findings would be of great benefit to the profession.

9 Finally, a relatively simple task is to make the NFSA's own history, and its key historical documents, visible on the NFSA website. NAA have set an excellent model to consider.

APPENDICES

1 LIST OF ACRONYMS

16mm	Sixteen millimetre (film)
35mm	Thirty five millimetre (film)
AA	Australian Archives
AACOBS	Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACA	Australian Council for the Arts
AF	Archive Forum
AFC	Australian Film Commission
AFI	Australian Film Institute
AFTA	Association for a National Film and Television Archive
AFTS/AFTRS	Australian Film and Television School (later Australian Film Television and Radio School)
AIMS	Audiovisual Information Management System
AIRS	Australian Institute of Recorded Sound
AMIA	Association of Moving Image Archivists
AHA	Australian Historical Association
ALIA/LAA	Australian Library and Information Association/ Library Association of Australia
APS	Australian Public Service
ARANZ	Archives and Records Association of New Zealand
ARSC	Association of Recorded Sound Collections
ASA	Australian Society of Archivists
ASDA	Australian Screen Directors' Association
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASRA	Australasian Sound Recordings Association
AV	Audiovisual
AWM	Australian War Memorial

BFI	British Film Institute
CAC	Commonwealth Archives Committee
CAO	Commonwealth Archives Office
CCAAA	Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations
CNL	Commonwealth National Library
COMAT	Collection Management Team project
CPL	Commonwealth Parliamentary Library
CSU	Charles Sturt University
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAHE	Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment
DASETT	Department of the Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories
DCITA	Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DHAE	Department of Home Affairs and Environment
FA	Film Australia
FD Australia	Film Division of the Commonwealth National Library/ National Library of
FFC	Australian Film Finance Corporation
FIAF	International Federation of Film Archives (Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film)
FIAT/IFTA	International Federation of Television Archives
FNFSA	Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive
FOCAL	Federation of Commercial Audiovisual Libraries
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRTB	Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council
GEH	George Eastman House (international Museum of Photography and Film)
IAML	International Association of Music Libraries
IASA	International Association of Sound Archives (later International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives)
ICA	International Council on Archives

IDC	Interdepartmental Committee
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
LIANZA	Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa
MAVIS	Merged AudioVisual Information System
MBTI	Myers Briggs Type Indicator
MOW	Memory of the World program of UNESCO
NC	Nicholas Clark report
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NFA	National Film Archive of the NLA
NFAAC	National Film Archive Advisory Committee of the NLA Council
NFLC	National Film Lending Collection
NFSA	National Film and Sound Archive
NFSAAC	National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee
NFTA	National Film Theatre of Australia
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
NHFR	National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library
NLA	National Library of Australia
NMA	National Museum of Australia
NMM	National Maritime Museum of Australia
NPG	National Portrait Gallery
OGPO	Old Government Printing Office
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
Paton Committee	National Library Enquiry Committee 1956-57
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SEAPAVAA	South East Asia-Pacific AudioVisual Archive Association
SR	Sound Recording Section of the NLA
TIOH	<i>Time in our hands</i> , the report of the National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee
TLC	Trades and Labour Council

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WP	AFC Working Party on the National Film Archive

2 TIMELINE

- 1896 Earliest surviving Australian sound recordings; first films made in Australia
- 1901 Australia becomes the first country to be born in front of a movie camera, as the Federation ceremonies in Sydney are filmed by the Salvation Army's Limelight Department – one of the earliest uses of film as a deliberate archival record. Later, the ceremonial naming of Canberra (1913) and the opening of Parliament house (1927) will be filmed. Fortunately all three records survive.
- 1906 *The Story of the Kelly Gang* – the world's first feature film
- 1923 First Australian radio stations begin broadcasting
- 1927 Royal Commission into the film industry
- 1929 Edison cylinders cease production: the 78rpm disc record becomes industry standard
- 1935 Establishment of *National Historical Film and Speaking Record Library* (NHFR) as part of the Commonwealth National Library (CNL)
- 1938 Establishment of FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives)
- 1945 Establishment of Australian National Film Board, and the CNL Film Division (FD) as its distribution agent for 16mm non-theatrical films.
- 1950s 78 rpm discs supplanted by vinyl LP's and 45 rpm singles; nitrate film replaced by triacetate film as the 35mm standard; beginnings of film festivals; film society movement gathers pace; the post-war economic boom; transistor radios popularised; NLA resumes acquisition of nitrate film and gradual building of "Historical Film Collection"
- 1951 Head of CNL FD documents and promulgates the case for its autonomy
- 1956 Television broadcasting begins in Australia; syndicated radio programming replaced by music formats; widespread closure of cinemas begins
- 1957 The National Library Enquiry Committee (Paton Committee) recommends separation of CNL into three entities – National Library of Australia (NLA), Commonwealth Archives Office (CAO, later AA and NAA) and Parliamentary Library (CPL). FD stays with NLA despite "dissimilarity in the work performed".
- 1958 Australian Film Institute established
- 1959 FD joins FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives) as probationary member
- 1960 *National Library of Australia Act* – includes film and sound recordings in the definition of "library material".
- 1962 FD becomes full member of FIAF
- 1966 *Forgotten Cinema* released.
- 1968 Establishment of Australian Council for the Arts

- 1969 Establishment of IASA (International Association of Sound Archives)
- 1970s Cultural “renaissance”: Gorton, Whitlam and Fraser governments, rebirth of Australian feature film production – the “new wave”, formal establishment of the conservation profession and enhanced preservation consciousness
- 1971 Peter Burgis appointed as sound recording consultant to NLA
- 1972 Establishment of [Australian] Film and Television School
- 1973 Distinct film archive unit formed within FD; separate sound archive (SR) inaugurated as part of NLA Music and Sound Recordings Section. Gradually during the 1970s the term *National Film Archive* (NFA) displaces *Historical Film Collection* and its variations, and SR emerges from the Music Section.
- 1974 Committee of Enquiry on Museums and National Collections established (and reports the following year)
- 1974 Establishment of Association for a National Film and Television Archive (AFTA), advocating better resourcing and autonomy for NFA; the “Edmondson report” on film archives overseas; Jerzy Toeplitz meets with NLA Council
- 1975 *Australian Film Commission (AFC) Act*, with authority to “encourage the proper keeping of films in archives in Australia”; colour television broadcasting begins; last cinema newsreel closes
- 1976 AFC establishes Working Party on the National Film Archive, involving NLA, Australian Archives (AA), Australian Film and Television School (AFTS), and the AFC.
- 1978 *Archives Bill* tabled, creating concerns that AA might subsume NFA and SR.
- 1979 AFC Working Party report to Minister – recommends increased resources and greater internal identity and autonomy within NLA.
- 1980 *Recommendation for the safeguarding and preservation of moving images* adopted by UNESCO General Conference; Pike and Cooper *Australian Film 1900-1977* published.
- 1981 NLA Council establishes Advisory Committee on the National Film Archive (NFAAC) in response to AFC Working Party report (WP) and Minister’s request;
- 1981 Corporately sponsored *Last Film Search* launched.
- 1982 NLA Sound Recording section (SR) created
- 1983 NFAAC recommends separation from NLA; Nicholas Clark report (NC) foresees limited growth and recommends NFA stays with NLA. NLA Council opposes separation. Archives Act passed.
- 1984 Cabinet decision: NFA and SR to be separated from NLA and become NFSA, initially within Department of Home Affairs (DHAE). New NFSA Advisory Committee (NFSAAC) appointed to prepare corporate vision. Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) established to review film/sound archiving arrangements in Commonwealth institutions. Archives Act proclaimed.
- 1985 NFSA Advisory Committee report *Time in our hands* is tabled. Proposes development plan, recommends NFSA become statutory authority.

- 1986 NFSA hosts FIAF congress: its first international gathering.
- 1988 Machinery of government changes. NFSA becomes part of DCITA.
- 1989 \$4 million sponsored *Operation Newsreel* project commences
- 1990 The “colour film disaster”: collections damaged in poor storage, crisis of confidence in NFSA. Results in restoration program and closure of access services for two years to bring backlogs under control
- 1992 NFSA hosts IASA conference
- 1995 NFSA hosts ASEAN seminar on audiovisual archive management: first regional gathering, leads to creation of SEAPAVAA (South East Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association)
- 1998 Postgraduate internet-based AV archiving course launched at University of NSW; UNESCO publishes *A Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving*.
- 1999 Building extension opened: name change to “ScreenSound Australia/ The National Collection of Screen and Sound” announced.
- 2000 Formation of Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive (FNFSA)
- 2002 Government enquiry into cultural institutions announced in December. The only major recommendation – merger of NFSA with AFC - is revealed in May 2003.
- 2003 Formation of Archive Forum (AF). AFC Act amended to absorb NFSA as of 1 July. AFC *Directions Stage 2* report released in December, plans modified in the light of negative media and constituency reaction.
- 2004 ScreenSound Australia becomes NFSA again in December. AF, FNFSA and others advocate NFSA autonomy. ALP announces policy to make NFSA statutory authority.
- 2006 Joint Archive Forum/ Friends/ Australian Society of Archivists/ Australian Historical Association policy document issued. Government enquiry into film funding structures recommends AFC merger with Film Finance Corp and Film Australia, NFSA included.
- 2007 Change of government. ALP honours promise to establish NFSA as statutory authority.
- 2008 *NFSA Act* and *Screen Australia Act* passed (Screen Australia merged AFC, FFC and FA – without NFSA) to take effect 1 July.



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA

Australia's Capital University

28 May 2009

COMMITTEE FOR ETHICS IN HUMAN RESEARCH

Project number 09-29

Mr Raymond Edmondson
100 Learmonth Drive
KAMBAH ACT 2902

APPROVED

Dear Mr Edmondson

The Committee for Ethics in Human Research has considered your application to conduct research with human subjects for the project entitled: **The Screensound Syndrome: repositioning a cultural icon.**

Approval is granted until 31/12/10 the anticipated completion date stated in the application.

The Committee notes that the information from NSFA is subject to FOI procedures for access and understands that you will comply with those procedures.

The following general conditions apply to your approval. These requirements are determined by University policy and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007):

- 1) **You must immediately report to the Committee anything which might warrant review of ethical approval of your project, including:**
 - (a) serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants;
 - (b) proposed changes in the protocol; and
 - (c) unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
- 2) **Monitoring:** You must assist the Committee to monitor the conduct of approved research by completing and promptly returning project review forms, which will be sent to you at the end of your project and, in the case of extended research, at least annually during the approval period.
- 3) **Discontinuation of research:** You (in conjunction with your supervisor) must inform the Committee, giving reasons, if the research is not conducted or is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

www.canberra.edu.au

Postal Address:

University of Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

Location:

University Drive Bruce ACT

ACT 2601 Australia

Phone: (06) 2099 1000

- 4) **Extension of approval:** If your project will not be complete by the expiry date stated above, you must apply in writing for extension of approval. Application should be made before current approval expires; should specify a new completion date; should include reasons for your request; and should be endorsed by your supervisor (if applicable).
- 5) **Retention and storage of data:** University policy states that all research data must be stored securely, on University premises, for a minimum of five years. You and your supervisor (if applicable) must ensure that all records are transferred to the University when the project is complete.
- 6) **Changes in contact details:** You should advise the Committee of any change of address during or soon after the approval period including, if appropriate, email address(es).

Please add the Contact Complaints form (attached) for distribution with your project.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Low
Secretary

Cc Dr Stuart Ferguson
Faculty of Arts and Design

**CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT AND
INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The following study has been reviewed and approved by the Committee for Ethics in Human Research:

Project title: **The Screensound Syndrome: repositioning a cultural icon.**

Project number: **09-29**

Principal researcher: **Mr Raymond Edmondson**

1. As a participant or potential participant in research, you will have received written information about the research project. If you have questions or problems which are not answered in the information you have been given, you should consult the researcher or (if the researcher is a student) the research supervisor. For this project, the appropriate person is

Name: **Dr Stuart Ferguson**

Contact details: **University of Canberra**

Phone: **(02) 6201 2042**

2. If you wish to discuss with an independent person a complaint relating to

- conduct of the project, or
- your rights as a participant, or
- University policy on research involving human participants,

you should contact the **Secretary of the University Research Committee**

Telephone (02) 6201 2884, Room 1D131, Office of Research and Research Degrees, University of Canberra ACT 2601

Providing research participants with this information is a requirement of the National Health and Medical Research Council *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*, which applies to all research with human participants conducted in Australia. Further information on University of Canberra research policy is available in *University of Canberra Guidelines for Responsible Practice in Research and Dealing with Problems of Research Misconduct* and the Committee for Ethics in Human Research *Human Ethics Manual*. These documents are available from the Research Office at the above address or on the University's web site at

https://guard.canberra.edu.au/policy/policy.php?pol_id=3136 (Research Guidelines)

<http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/ethics/human> (Human Ethics Manual)

Ray Edmondson

From: Alessandra.Miranda [Alessandra.Miranda@canberra.edu.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 14 September 2011 3:22 PM
To: 'ray@archival.com.au'
Cc: Human Ethics Committee
Subject: HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE - Recently expired Application Notification
Attachments: CEHR Review form.doc

Dear Raymond

RE: Human Ethics application entitled: The Screensound Syndrome: repositioning a cultural icon.

Project No: 09-29

Date of approval: 28/05/2009-- Expiry date: 30/06/2011

Please note your Ethics approval has now expired. Please complete the attached form and return it via email/hard copy by **16th September 2011**. Failure to complete and return the form by the above date will result in termination and closure of your project.

The Committee for Ethics in Human Research is required by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to monitor the conduct of approved research. Researchers must submit review reports annually during the approval period, and when projects are complete. The Committee reports to the NHMRC each year on its compliance with this requirement.

In signing the Declarations on the application form you (and your research supervisor, if you are a student) agreed to assist the Committee to monitor the conduct of research by submitting project review reports as required.

If you have any questions, please contact the Secretary on 02 6201 5870.

Regards
CEHR Secretary

THIS EMAIL IS AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED BY RESEARCHMASTER ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE FOR ETHICS IN HUMAN RESEARCH.

Michaela Dalgleish
Ethics & Compliance Officer

Committee for Ethics in Human Research (CEHR)
<http://www.canberra.edu.au/ucresearch/ethics/human-ethics-manual>

Committee for Ethics in Animal Experimentation (CEAE)
<http://www.canberra.edu.au/ucresearch/ethics/animal>

T: +61 (0)2 6201 5870
F: +61 (0)2 6201 5466
E: Michaela.Dalgleish@canberra.edu.au

Research Services Office (Room: 1 D 116)
A: Building 1, Kirinari Street, Bruce, ACT 2617
W: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/welcome>

Australian Government Higher Education (CRICOS)
Registered Provider number: #00212X

*Sent electronically
14/9/11*

4 AUTOETHNOGRAPHY: REFLECTIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF A PERSONAL JOURNEY

The following personal reflection was written in late July 2005, when the NFSA was still a division of the Australian Film Commission. Drafting of the thesis was just beginning, and the research question was still exclusively focussed on the 1999 "rebranding" and its consequences for the NFSA. During the currency of this project, events have overtaken some original assumptions. In July 2008, the Australian Film Commission was abolished and the NFSA became a statutory authority in its own right, secured by the National Film and Sound Archive Act (2008).

1 At the outset of the project some personal reflection is necessary, since the task I have pursued arises from my own career experience and my personal involvement in the slice of history under examination. This has given me a unique insight into the life and culture of the NFSA and its operating context but it also means that, by definition, I am not a detached observer. This reality will also be reflected in the fieldwork – the personal dynamic of gathering oral recollections from other players. I will rekindle memories which may have grown dim as perhaps no-one else can now do: the way in which they are recounted to me as a 'player', as well as their content, will itself be significant and part of the story. How those involved view the events in hindsight may be quite different to the way they saw things at the time.

2 I entered what is now the audiovisual archiving field in 1968, when I was appointed Reference Librarian of the Film Section of the National Library of Australia.⁷²⁸ One of my responsibilities was oversight of the "historical collection" of films, later dubbed (with my encouragement) as the National Film Archive. A five month personal study tour of film archives in Europe and North America in 1973 gave me a frame of reference to assess the state of archiving in Australia and to convince me that the future lay in the creation of a national film archive as an autonomous institution, separate from the National Library.⁷²⁹ This finally happened – with accompanying trauma and ethical soul-searching – in 1984 with the creation of the NFSA.⁷³⁰ I had to choose between loyalty to my immediate employer (the National Library) and the larger, but vaguer, obligation of public servants to serve the best interests of the nation.

⁷²⁸ For an autobiographical article on the influences that led me into this job, see Ray Edmondson, "An Archivist's Story," [Hong Kong Film Archive Newsletter](#) (2002).

⁷²⁹ Edmondson, [A Study Tour of Film Archives in England, Europe and the U.S.A.](#).

⁷³⁰ Graham Shirley, "Activism Towards a National Film Archive," [Cinema Papers](#) (1984)., Cumming, "Film Rescued but Archive in Trouble.", Ray Edmondson, "You Only Live Once: On Being a Troublemaking Professional," [The Moving Image](#) 2.1 (2002).

3 I became the Deputy Director of the new institution. It was a position I retained until my departure in April 2001, an event that was, in part, connected to the consequences of the NFSA's re-branding in June 1999. At various times I have been characterized as the "guiding father"⁷³¹ or "the moving spirit behind the creation of the archive"⁷³². This is the view of others: certainly the growth of the archive as a concept and, later, an institution, and of audiovisual archiving as a profession, has been my passion and the focus of my career. The 1985 "grand plan" for the institution⁷³³, which I drafted and which embodies my own – and others' – vision for it, has been largely realised in subsequent years, even though it is now under threat.⁷³⁴

4 The name National Film Archive, which identified the relevant sub-set of the National Library's Film Section from around 1970 onward, conformed to standard nomenclature within the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF). When both the film archive and the Library's sound recording activity were separated from the Library to become the basis of the new institution in 1984, the logical name of National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) was assigned in the enabling Cabinet decision. The NFSA's first Advisory Committee reviewed the name⁷³⁵ and affirmed it. Subsequent Committees/ Councils revisited it in later years but saw no need to change.

5 Until events made it so in 1998, the name – or 'brand' – had never been an issue that I or my colleagues had thought much about. I noticed that people sometimes got the title "National Film and Sound Archive" mixed up (for example, calling it the "National Film and Archive") but that kind of problem was not confined to the NFSA. In writing my original monograph on the philosophy of audiovisual archiving⁷³⁶ I found myself pondering the equivocal associations of the terms "audiovisual" and "archive" but finding nothing better to suggest. (Six years later, in the revised edition of this work, nomenclature had become a major section, and my views – and indeed those of the profession – had evolved considerably.)⁷³⁷

6 I was therefore not opposed in principle to a "re-branding" of the NFSA when this began to be a matter of evident priority to the NFSA Director, Ron Brent. It was not an issue I had needed to think through, so my initial reaction was one of caution but not

⁷³¹ National Film and Sound Archive, "Ray Bows out - and In," [News from the Archive](#) 2001.

⁷³² Cohen, [The Life of the Party](#).

⁷³³ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, [Time in Our Hands](#).

⁷³⁴ Australian Film Commission, [Australian Film Commission Screensound Australia Integration: Review of Programs: Stage Two Directions Paper](#), 12 December 2003.

⁷³⁵ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, [Time in Our Hands](#).

⁷³⁶ Edmondson, [A Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving](#).

⁷³⁷ Edmondson, [Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles](#).

opposition. A process began in which I was not initially involved, and during which I was frequently absent with overseas commitments. But as I became increasingly alarmed with the speed and secrecy of the process, the blind acceptance of consultants' advice, the dominance of a deadline (the opening of the new building wing by the Prime Minister) and the way in which the idea of re-branding as a panacea seemed to rapidly become the central preoccupation of management and Council, I "invited myself in" to the process and began to express my emerging reservations to Brent – though to no avail. It only angered him. It seemed that no one else shared my concerns, and I became the odd-man-out, the recalcitrant opposed to change.

7 I didn't then know, or suspect, many of the facts about the process that would later emerge. Being so at odds with the views of my colleagues bothered me, and I began to doubt my own judgment. I remember having two sleepless nights worrying about the implications of the change. But - not for the first time in my life - I rationalized the issue away and thereby ignored my instincts. Long after the event I mused that it would have been open to me to "leak" relevant documents from the secret process, which might have stopped the whole thing in its tracks - but the possibility never occurred to me at the time, and I don't know what I would have done if it had, nor what its consequences might have been. Once the Minister had made his decision, it was my job to faithfully get behind the new brand.

8 It was when the private and public reactions began to come in – beginning on the night of the launch, 21 June 1999 – that I realised my doubts had been justified and a serious mistake had been made. I therefore took it on myself to document stakeholder feedback and relay this back to the Director and Council. This was greeted with anger, and it was quickly assumed that I was fomenting the feedback myself: a view which couldn't be sustained as reaction spread and feedback came from diverse sources. A lengthy report to Council on the matter, which I prepared at my own initiative, was ignored. After making a sincere attempt for nearly three months to support the new brand, I had to recognise that it was unsupportable, and that I would serve the best interests of the Archive and the public by doing what I could to have the original name, or something like it, reinstated.

9 As Deputy Director (SES 1 level) I had always found it hard to calibrate my performance against public service norms since my only reference point in a small, and professionally isolated, agency like the NFSA was my immediate superior, the Director, Ron Brent (SES 2 level). It had long been an uneasy relationship. I was a career archivist, had grown the Archive since 1968 and represented the corporate history. He was a lawyer and a career bureaucrat who gained the post in 1992. Our values and strategic visions for the institution were different.

10 The six-monthly mandatory assessments of my performance which he made were always unwritten, and tended to be more negative than positive. I approached a former colleague in the Public Service Commission about these concerns, and with his

facilitation, and Brent's agreement, a "mentor" (Rex Moncur, a retired senior public servant) was engaged as a source of advice and to help formalize the assessment processes. These became written and the evaluation of my performance took on a more positive note.

11 At the same time, the negative flow-on from the rebranding put increasing strain on my relationship with Brent. Occasional, vague suggestions in the past about the benefits of "taking a package" and becoming a consultant to the Archive became more pointed when he made it clear that if I could not support the re-branding I would have to leave. When management consultants were then brought in to advise on the rearrangement of the Archive's top management structure, Moncur quickly saw the writing on the wall and advised me to apply for a redundancy package while I could still argue from a position of strength. For personal, financial and professional reasons I had, in any case, been contemplating 'retirement' since mid-2000 so I could devote myself to my increasing overseas commitments. With the assistance of my Union, Moncur and I constructed a proposal which provided for the long-mooted ongoing consultancy arrangements. This was accepted with alacrity at a meeting which both of us had with the Director. This was followed by a written agreement.

12 When, subsequently, it became clear that this agreement would not be kept I was advised by both my mentor and the Union to immediately turn the matter over to my solicitor. The Archive's parent department (DCITA) stepped in and the final separation arrangement was settled with them. After 33 unbroken years I left the Archive, and the Public Service, in April 2001.

13 By this time, the Friends of the NFSA and others, in addition to maintaining protest about the name change, were expressing increasing concerns about certain actions and policy directions of the Archive. I was now free to be an activist myself, so I chose to fill what I saw as a vacuum – the lack of in-depth analysis and exposition about the re-branding and governance of the Archive. I began to prepare articles for professional journals on this and related issues. I also engaged in relevant correspondence with politicians and government agencies concerning the implications of the re-branding. My first major article⁷³⁸, published in May 2002, was prepared with much consultation and some trepidation. It was akin to publicly throwing down the gauntlet, but – Archive management and Council apart – the feedback was strongly affirming. I have continued to participate in various advocacy groups as the NFSA's fortunes took a turn for the worse in mid-2003 after its takeover by the Australian Film Commission (AFC).

⁷³⁸ Edmondson, "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Governance, Guardianship and the Screensound Saga."

14 It would be satisfying to see the restoration of the NFSA's original name in January 2005 – over a year after I had embarked on this doctoral project – as a vindication of constituency activism, including my own, as well as a return to common sense. But it would be an incomplete reaction. Given the now diminished status of the institution, which itself may be, in part, a consequence outcome of the continuing complaint about the “ScreenSound” brand, it is bittersweet. Under the AFC, the Archive's autonomy has been curtailed, and the separate legislative status promised back in 1984 is still elusive.

15 Why, then, have so many people devoted so much effort to the restoration of a simple name? Why should it matter so much? Why has it commanded so much of my time and energy?

16 As the pop song has it, “you don't know what you've got till it's gone”.⁷³⁹ I did not fully realise the crucial importance of the National Film and Sound Archive name, and all its associations, until after the event. In a tangible sense, the discarding of the name robbed me, my colleagues and the Archive's long standing supporters of our personal histories – of everything we and those before us had done to build an institution and an idea. It drew a line under them and replaced that idea with a different, unexplained idea without antecedents. A name was imposed which failed to deliver on its promise, and whose origins proved incompetent and dishonorable. Recovering the lost name was essential to repair the fracture in institutional continuity, and restore the Archive's intellectual integrity.

So my reasons for undertaking this doctoral project are both professional and personal:

(i) To explore the implications of an issue which seems not to be well understood in the field of cultural institutions, and to which AV archives, most of which lack defining legislation, could be extremely vulnerable. NFSA is one of the world's highest profile AV archives and is looked to as an exemplar, so it is important that the lessons be fully understood.

(ii) To bring understanding and closure, to restore the intellectual integrity of the NFSA and help reintegrate its corporate history; to do justice to staff and stakeholders whose questions have never been answered; and to add to the historical record. The NFSA, like other collecting institutions, exists to foster research as well as preservation, in this case into the audiovisual heritage of Australia. The NFSA, as a concept and an organisation, is itself part of that heritage as well as part of a wider profession. It needs to understand and find reassurance in its own history.

(iii) To reflect on my personal role in the sequence of events, on the “what if's”, on my responsibilities and the ethics of my choices, and on the ethical dilemmas of professionals when they find themselves facing the unacceptable.

⁷³⁹ Joni Mitchell, *Big Yellow Taxi*, 1970.

5 PRO-FORMA ORAL HISTORY INVITATION LETTERS AND DRAFT QUESTIONS

[university letterhead]

[address and salutation]

NFSA: THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY

I am writing to invite you to participate in an oral history interview as part of my doctoral research program, which deals with aspects of the history of the National Film and Sound Archive. The enclosures give more details of the project.

I would be asking you to devote one to two hours of your time to record an interview, and perhaps the same amount of time in preparation for it. To assist you in this, prior to the interview, you will be provided with a succinct historical narrative to assist as a “memory jogger”, and a list of questions. Following the interview, you will be provided with a transcript to check and correct. At a later date you will be offered a draft thesis chapter in which all the oral histories recorded during the program are analysed, so that you may ensure your comments are accurately reflected, in context.

To maintain an arm’s-length approach, the interviews will be conducted by a third party, Ms Roslyn Russell, a Canberra-based historian. If you agree to participate, Ms Russell will approach you to arrange a mutually convenient time and place for your interview.

Your interview will be regarded as confidential and will be dealt with as outlined in the enclosures. Your identity will not be divulged in the thesis unless you so direct. The future disposition of the recording and transcript will be for you to determine.

I look forward to your participation and would be glad if you could advise me of your response by email (ray@archival.com.au), phone (02 6231 65688) or mail (100 Learmonth Drive, Kambah ACT 2902).

Yours sincerely

Ray Edmondson

NFSA: the quest for identity

Consent form

I have read and understood the information about the research. I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this project. I have had opportunity to ask questions about my participation in the research. All questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that any information or personal details gathered in the course of this research about me are confidential and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be used or published without my express permission

I agree to this interview being audio recorded subject to the conditions I have specified below.

1 INTERVIEWEE DETAILS

Name:

Contact address:

Contact phone number:

Email address:

Place of interview:

Date of interview

2 IDENTIFICATION:

I do/do not give my permission to be identified by name in the thesis or any reports resulting from this research

3 DISPOSITION OF RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPT

At the conclusion of the research, the recording and any transcript is to be held by the University of Canberra for 5 years. Thereafter it is to be disposed of as follows:

I wish to have the recording and transcript delivered to me

I wish to have the recording and transcript destroyed

I wish to have the recording and transcript donated to (name institution) under conditions of access which I will separately specify

I wish the recording to be retained by the University if it wishes to do so, under conditions of access which I will separately specify

Other:

Signed by:

Date:

NFSA: The quest for identity

Participant information statement

AIM OF THE PROJECT

In June 1999, the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) was rebranded as *ScreenSound Australia*. It was a turning point for a major national memory institution which – unlike its peers – still lacked a legislative mandate, legal personality or – so it seemed to some – a distinctive identity. It proved the beginning of a turbulent chain of events during which the very existence of the institution would be threatened, before the security of independent statutory authority status was finally reached in 2008, with the passage of the *National Film and Sound Archive Act*.

The study analyses the institution's emergence and quest for autonomy and a professional and public identity, in the larger context of its history and the government policy environment, and with particular attention to the rebranding experience and its aftermath. The NFSA traces its beginnings back to 1935 as a subset of the Commonwealth National Library, later the National Library of Australia, from which it was separated in 1984. Against the background of three quarters of century of shifting government policy, stakeholder activism and the evolution of Australia's libraries, archives and museums, the NFSA's quest to define a new profession and a new institutional concept has proved a very twisted tale. The study draws on a variety of documentary sources, including government statements and reports, press releases and articles, publicity materials, correspondence, memos, minutes, email traffic, and work diaries.

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The project is intended to discern fundamental lessons which are generally applicable to the public identity, governance and security of cultural institutions. It will elucidate the role of an institution's external constituency and support base in relation to these things. It will also document an aspect of the history of the NFSA as a contribution to general knowledge: such institutional histories are still rare in any country.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

Data for the project will come from the collation of a wide range of source documents, ranging from parliamentary Hansard and official reports to media coverage and listserv traffic, and set against references to relevant literature. The recording of oral history recollections from individuals related to the NFSA during the last decade will provide important first hand data to complement these sources.

All this data will contribute to developing a chronological narrative on which analysis will be based and conclusions drawn. It is expected that the resulting thesis will be lodged in mid 2011, and it will be accessible to you as a participant.

RESEARCHER and INTERVIEWER

This research project is being carried out by Mr Ray Edmondson OAM BA DipLib, a doctoral student in the Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra. His principal supervisor is Dr Stuart Ferguson, Assistant Professor, Information Studies, Faculty of Arts and Design.

Mr Edmondson was Deputy Director of the NFSA up to April 2001. He now practices as a professional consultant in the audiovisual archiving field, and has long been an international writer, teacher, commentator and speaker within this profession. His website can be visited at www.archival.com.au. The fact of his own contemporary participation in the events and debate covered by the study has been recognised by the University as a factor that can potentially both facilitate and limit the gathering of personal recollections. This dynamic is itself an integral aspect of the study.

For this reason, oral history interviews for the project will be carried out at “arm’s length” by an experienced Canberra-based historian, Ms Roslyn Russell. Ms Russell operates her own museums consultancy and, among other things, is chair of the International Advisory Committee of UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” program. Her website can be visited at www.rrms.com.au. Ms Russell was a contemporary external observer of some of the events covered in the study, though not a commentator on them. She will be working both from her own recollections and from a briefing provided by Mr Edmondson.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

If you agree to be interviewed, Ms Russell will meet you at a mutually agreed location and time and will make an audio recording of the interview. Duration should be approximately one to two hours. Prior to this, you will be provided with a succinct narrative of events and a set of questions which will serve as a point of departure for your interview.

A transcript will be made of your interview, for ease of writing up the research, and a copy will be sent to you for perusal and correction before the analysis is finalised.

Your involvement in this project is voluntary. You may decline to take part, or withdraw at any time without providing an explanation, or refuse to answer a question put to you in the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

You will be asked at the start of the interview if you are willing to be identified in any reports or writings resulting from this research. If you request that any information given in the interview is to remain confidential, that information will be accessible only to the researcher and the principal supervisor.

If you do not wish to be personally identified, the information you provide which is used in the thesis will be presented in such a way that personal identification is not possible. The use of fictitious names and identities, or the paraphrasing of comments without revealing the source, are examples of ways in which this might be done.

DATA STORAGE

Electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer or similar device, and paper records in a locked filing cabinet or equivalent. For the duration of the project, data will be stored in the researcher's office and be accessible only to him.

At the conclusion of the project, your data will be stored at the University of Canberra for a period of 5 years. At the end of that period, you may direct that the recording and transcript (if any) be dealt with in one of the following ways:

(a) that both will be destroyed by shredding/ deletion

(b) that both will be delivered to you

(c) that both will be donated to the University or the collection of a cultural institution of your choice under conditions specified by you.

In the case of (a) and (b) the researcher will provide a written declaration that the material has been returned or destroyed. In the case of (c), the researcher will link you to the relevant institution and be available to facilitate the donation process. In all three cases, the researcher will not retain a copy of your material in any form unless you expressly authorise him to do so.

ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE

The project has been approved by the Committee for Ethics in Human Research at the University.

QUESTIONS

Participants may seek further information or raise queries on the project by contacting:

(a) the researcher, Ray Edmondson: phone (02) 6231 6849 or 0413 486 849, fax (02) 6231 6699, email ray@archival.com.au

(b) the supervisor, Dr Stuart Ferguson: phone (02) 6201 2042, fax 6201 2630, email Stuart.Ferguson@canberra.edu.au

NFSA: THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

INTERVIEW QUESTION FRAMEWORK

1 (If applicable) What do you recall of the context of the film and sound archives when they were part of the National Library of Australia? For example: the culture and priorities of the Library, interaction with stakeholders, responses to issues affecting the film and sound archives? Can you recall direct personal experiences? Where did the driving force come from? What do you recall of relationships with other National Library personnel and areas?

2 (If applicable) The controversial separation of the NFSA from the National Library in 1984 was opposed by the Library and its supporters but favoured by the film and sound communities. Why do you think these opposing views and public feelings emerged? Do you think they were justified? Why? Do you think the name “National Film and Sound Archive” was appropriate? Why or why not? Were you comfortable with the new body and its name?

3 (If applicable) From 1984 onwards, how successful was the NFSA in establishing and projecting its identity and purpose? For example, was it clearly differentiated from other collecting institutions? Was its identity or name confused with other bodies? Was the lack of a legal personality and enabling legislation a problem? Was there community awareness both inside and outside Canberra? Was the NFSA’s Advisory Council effective? Was the NFSA hampered by its relationship with the portfolio Department?

4 Recall the launch of the “ScreenSound” brand in June 1999. What were you doing then? Were you present at the launch? What’s your memory of what happened, how people reacted and how you felt about it? (If applicable) What’s your recollection of the branding consultants, Keystone Corporate Positioning, and the role they played? Were you involved in any of their interviews or focus groups?

5 Why do you think the name change happened? What was the rationale? What were the risks and how were they handled? Did you think the two-tier logic (marketing name “ScreenSound Australia”, formal name “National Collection of Screen and Sound”) worked? Why do you think the word “archive” was dropped from the name in 1999 – and then later restored? Was “ScreenSound Australia” better than “National Film and Sound Archive” for public profile and/or professional purposes? Why? Have your views changed over time?

6 What expectations did the re-naming raise for you? Were they fulfilled? Did the name change affect you – and, if so, how did you respond? What do you recall of public and private reactions – for instance, in the media, among colleagues, supporters and users of the Archive?

7 What was your reaction to the merger of the Archive with the Australian Film Commission (announced in May 2003)? Why do you think it happened? Why did the AFC ultimately restore the name “National Film and Sound Archive”? What was the reaction?

8 As the merger unfolded in 2003 and 2004, how did you evaluate it? Was it a good idea? Why or why not? What did you see as the *specific* consequences for the Archive’s autonomy and identity?

9 How did you react to the passage of the *National Film and Sound Archive Act* in 2008? Why do you think the Act came about? Do you think it provides an adequate basis for the long term or does it fall short?

10 What specific lessons for the future can be learned from this history – for the NFSA, and for cultural institutions generally? Lessons (for example) about marketing and branding, governance, publicity, management, relations with stakeholders, organisational philosophy and rationale, ethics?

11 How has the sequence of events since 1935 helped or hindered the preservation and accessibility of Australia’s audiovisual heritage? Assess the pace of development of skills, infrastructure and resourcing. Was material lost that could/should have been saved (examples?) What have we lost or gained over time?

12 What do you see as the responsibility of governments and the public service towards collecting institutions like the NFSA? Is there an inherent “duty of care” to protect them and their collections? If so, was it honoured or neglected in the course of the NFSA’s history? In what ways did the parent Department and Ministers support or undermine the NFSA’s identity? How well did NFSA advocate its needs to Government? Was the public good served or neglected, and at what points in the NFSA’s history?

13 What do you see as the responsibility of stakeholder groups and individuals in advocating for NFSA and cultural institutions generally? On the other hand, when should they expect to be consulted? What are their legitimate grounds for complaint? How should stakeholders be represented in relevant boards, committees etc? Has the history of the NFSA reflected these expectations? Have there been times of insularity or poor performance – and if so, what were the outcomes?

14 Could you briefly give your own rationale for the NFSA’s existence as an independent institution? If it did not exist, could any other institution adequately fulfil its functions? If you could start with a “clean sheet of paper”, what should the NFSA’s functions be?

(These questions are a framework and starter for discussion. They can be taken in any order. They don’t all need to be answered. They shouldn’t constrain the discussion if you want to elaborate in any direction)

OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTS

The following are key marketing, management and promotional concepts which recur throughout this thesis. None have precise definition: widely used in the literature, they are defined differently by different writers – when they are defined at all. They are essentially concepts developed in the world of commerce, although they are now being adapted to the world of non-profit institutions. For each I have constructed a definition based in most cases on the dictionary meanings provided by the American Marketing Association and brandchannel.com, fleshed out with thoughts offered by other writers.

BRANDING

In its English usage, the word derives from Old Norse *brandr* meaning “to burn”. It refers to the practice that producers had of burning their mark – or trademark – onto products. It was later applied as a means of identifying ownership of cattle, and the way craftsmen would put a mark or identifier on their work without detracting from the beauty of the piece. In the 19th century it was adapted to the mass production of packaged food and other goods, as an intimation of quality. Now brands act as signposts in a cluttered marketplace.

A brand is a mixture of attributes, tangible and intangible, symbolised in a trade mark which, if managed properly, creates value⁷⁴⁰ and influence. It may include a name, symbol, colour combination, slogan, corporate style or any other features that differentiate one seller’s good or service from another. It establishes a preference in customers’ minds and hearts and nurtures a relationship with them.

Brands communicate and evoke images, expectations of value, emotions, past experiences and associations and stand for more than the objective quality or character of a product. An example is the many brands of bottled water which attract vastly varying prices for essentially the same product: one that, moreover, is also available free from a tap. (Kuraoka; Benson and Foley; Nissim "Brand Loyalty: The Psychology of Preference; Dolak; Ries and Ries *The Origin of Brands : How Product Evolution Creates Endless Possibilities for New Brands*; Haig; Braun; Serrat)

⁷⁴⁰ “Value” has different interpretations: from a marketing or consumer perspective it is “the promise and delivery of an experience; from a business perspective it is “the security of future earnings”; from a legal perspective it is “a separable piece of intellectual property”. (Brandchannel.com)

BRAND EQUITY

The value of the brand. It is the sum of all distinguishing qualities of a brand, drawn from all relevant stakeholders, that results in personal commitment to and demand for the brand: these differentiating thoughts and feelings make the brand valued and valuable. It is a corporate asset. It is difficult to measure, although there are different methodologies for assessing it in financial terms⁷⁴¹ or by way of non-financial attributes such as awareness, loyalty, perceived quality and associations. (Aaker; Dolak; Interbrand)

LOGO

The term is a clipped or shortened form of *logotype* which, in the days of hot metal typesetting was a uniquely set and arranged typeface. It is now a word or phrase that serves to identify an organisation, or a graphic design that is used as a continuing symbol for an organisation or brand. It is sometimes synonymous with *brand* or *trademark*. (Klein)

POSITIONING

This refers to the customer's perceptions of the place a product or brand occupies in a market segment. It often involves differentiating the organisation's offering from the competition by making or implying a comparison in terms of specific attributes.

For example, some companies dominate their segment by having arrived in it first – such as Kodak for photography, Kleenex for tissues, Xerox for copying, Coca Cola for cola. Some companies create positioning statements to define the place it wants a product to occupy in the minds of a specific target audience.⁷⁴² Companies or products may be *re-positioned* if their current position is not considered advantageous. (Holt; Ries and Trout)

⁷⁴¹ According to the Interbrand methodology, the three most valuable global brands in 2010 were (in order) Coca Cola, IBM and Microsoft. In 2002 Coca Cola's brand equity was valued at nearly \$70 billion – more than all the tangible assets of the company combined. Marty Neumeier and American Institute of Graphic Arts., The Brand Gap : How to Bridge the Distance between Business Strategy and Design : A Whiteboard Overview, 1st ed. (Indianapolis, Ind.: New Riders Pub., 2003).

⁷⁴² PepsiCo's positioning statement in the 1990s for the soft drink Mountain Dew reads: "To 18-year-old males, who embrace excitement, adventure and fun, Mountain Dew is the great tasting carbonated soft drink that exhilarates like no other because it is energising, thirst-quenching and has a one-of-a-kind citrus flavour."

REBRANDING

Rebranding is the practice of building *anew* a name and identity representative of a differentiated position in the mind frame of stakeholders and a distinctive identity from competitors. Can include repositioning, renaming, redesign, relaunch. It can be subtle – or major, such as changing the name or logo. It is almost always internally driven, almost never customer driven.

Rebranding can occur for several reasons, including the aftermath of a merger or change in ownership structure, or because of reputational problems, or a change in strategy or circumstances. (Duncan; Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin; Kuraoka; Perkins)

CORPORATE IDENTITY

Corporate identity is the way the organisation differentiates itself from other organisations: how it sees itself, in terms of achievements, values, mission and aspects of products such as range, price and quality. For a library or information service, corporate identity might emerge from general professional concerns associated with public service, customer care and accessibility to a wide range of print and electronic information sources. On the other hand, corporate *image* in the eyes of customers may be associated with shelves of dry and dusty books, inconvenient opening hours and the need for silence.

It is the set of constructs organisational members use to describe what is central, enduring and distinctive about their organisation. It is the sum of the culture, structure, communications, strategy, reputations, environment and stakeholders. (Rowley; Kim and Hatcher)

The following extracts come from No gray profession: reminiscences of a career in Australian libraries by Harrison Bryan (Adelaide, Auslib Press, 1994). They are drawn from Chapter 8 "Indian Summer", which covers pp 110 to 147 and the footnotes are Bryan's own, reproduced from the book. Bryan took up his position as NLA Director General in July 1981, following George Chandler. During his term, Chandler had reorganised the NLA into five subject libraries which included ANSTEL (Australian National Science and Technology Library), ANSOL (Australian National Social Sciences Library and, ANHUL (Australian National Humanities Library).

A final oddity, the significance of which was not recognised at the time, was that the National Film Library, firmly so called, was equally firmly subordinated to ANHUL. ...I was not impressed with the half way reorganisation I had inherited. I had had considerable reservations about George [Chandler's] intent from the very first... As I said in my first *Annual Report*, 'while appreciating the importance of the recent creation of national subject libraries in developing the wide scope of the Library's interests, it was concluded that there was need for greater integration of activities to secure increased economy in the use of staff.'

One element which I accepted far too carelessly, in my ignorance, would come back to haunt me later. This was what was seen by those involved as a further blow to the status of the Library's film operations. Though I had forgotten it was the case, in Harold [White's] time films comprised, on the Library of Congress plan and using its nomenclature, a separate Division. Allan Fleming subsumed them within a Special Materials Branch, but this happened to be headed by the senior film officer. Under George [Chandler], as we have seen, the National Film Library appeared, though not with the same status as the designated 'national' subject libraries. I added insult to injury, apparently, by agreeing that they should comprise a separate section within the Australian Studies Branch, as were Pictorial, Music and Sound Recording.⁷⁴³

By this time, however, both subsections of films had the word 'national' in their titles; the National Film Lending Collection and the National Film Archive and the NLA was already involved with the Australian Film Commission, the Film and Television School and the Australian Archives in a detailed examination of the Archive....a special problem was presented by the film archive, too much of whose stock – and, of course, potential stock – was on nitrate film which was dangerously close to the end of its life.

An early difficulty I had was with the functions, and the functioning, of the Council's Advisory Committees. ...There were two kinds of committee: three 'subject' committees (one each in the humanities, the social sciences and science and technology) and three

⁷⁴³ Whether or not as a reaction to this thoughtlessness of mine, the people in charge of films were easily the most assertive of my colleagues. From the beginning Ray Edmondson took every opportunity to bypass his Branch Head. This was widely disapproved of and there was fairly general approbation throughout the Library any time Films were seen to 'get their come uppance'.

'special purpose' committees.... When I enquired of each their thoughts about their role, there was widespread reference to the chronic emptiness of their agendas...and a frequent expression of the view that there was 'no virtue in meeting just for meeting's sake'. ...I undertook a full scale review in 1983, from which the subject committees emerged with reconstituted memberships and an annual meeting cycle. Library Services to the Handicapped remained and was joined by...the Advisory Committee on the National Film Archive and the Information Industry Advisory Committee.

Unfortunately we were not to enjoy the benign influence of Bob Ellicott as Minister for very long... We acquired Ian Wilson in his place, of whom the best that can be said is that he was not actually antipathetic to the Library, though 'pathetic' was a term often used to describe his performance as Minister.

As for the ANG [National Gallery of Australia] ...thanks largely to two great benefactions of Sir Rex Nan Kivell, we had a much better collection in some areas of early Australian art than it did. The situation was met, amicably enough on the surface, by the NLA freely lending specific paintings to the Gallery.... there were not lacking suggestions, however, not only that the NLA was an inappropriate location for works of art,⁷⁴⁴ but that we had mistakenly, or even improperly, appropriated the Nan Kivell gifts, which the donor would surely have directed to the ANG if it had existed at the time of his first generosity. It was typical of the situation that these questions were never raised with me by James Mollison [ANG Director], but were frequently and fiercely debated by our subordinates.

Considerable success attended the efforts of the officers of the NFA to draw attention to the rapidly increasing danger that early Australian films made on nitrate stock would be lost forever. Under the rallying cry 'Nitrate Won't Wait' they secured funds from Kodak and undertook a Last Film Search, which located a considerable number of films to be transferred to the archive and copied onto acetate stock. The officers concerned very properly received public commendation for their enterprise.

In other respects film archive affairs were not moving nearly so smoothly. The appearance of the Advisory Committee on the National Film Archive had been delayed, as had the final constitution of the National Advisory Committee on Library Services to the Handicapped, over the question of not appointing a member of Council as Chairman but preferring instead an 'outsider' with appropriate qualifications and experience, a move which I favoured. As finally approved by Council, this procedure proved a great success with the first committee, but was only the first of several tactical errors I made with regard to the NFA Committee.

A second error was to reveal to the Committee, at its first meeting, my own surprise to discover the extent of the NLA's film operations. A third was to agree that the Committee, unlike all other Advisory committees of the Council could meet, not at the NLA, but in Sydney, indeed: on the premises of the Federation of Commercial Television Stations (FACTS), an organisation that brought together many of the major users of the NFA.

⁷⁴⁴ There was, of course, a fundamental difference in the two institutions' approaches to works of art. Our interest in pictures was only in their value as contemporary records, whereas ANG sought them for their artistic worth.

In retrospect, it is clear that an even more fundamental error was to have an advisory committee linked directly to a specific section of the Library's administration, rather than to an area of its operations. As it became clear, all too soon, this played into the hands of a group, of which the members of the Committee turned out to be the very nucleus, dedicated to the establishment of an independent film archive.

Despite my best efforts and, I confess, to my considerable chagrin – since I thought that more than thirty years' experience with university library committees had equipped me fairly well for handling such bodies – the Committee rapidly assumed an adversarial position towards the very body it was purporting to advise.

My position was not made any easier by the fact that Committee members clearly saw themselves as allied with the staff of the archive, who were present to offer both technical and secretarial support, against the NLA Administration. It was a cause of minor irritation to me, I confess, when the Committee, however accurately, referred to Ray Edmondson, the head of the Film Section, in my presence, as 'Management'.

As early as April 1982 I was reporting to Council that the Committee 'was developing in a different manner to other Committees', and that there was a 'risk that it might overlook its role as an advisory committee to Council and that this could cause administrative difficulties.' The situation was greatly exacerbated by my accepting a recommendation from Ray that access to the archive be restricted to a level that the present staff could handle. I had to point out to an extremely stropky Committee that it had been a choice between temporarily suspending some services and letting all slip. I had to emphasise that 'the immediate crisis, which had only just been brought to [my] attention and the longer term staffing needs were too different matters.' I might say that Ray did his utmost to dissociate himself from his recommendation. An uneasy truce prevailed.

The change of government brought us, of course, a new Minister. Barry Cohen struck me, I must say, as a lazy man, or as lazy as the very real pressures of Ministerial life allowed him to be. I was bitterly disappointed that, overall, I never managed to fire any real enthusiasm in him for the NLA because, once his enthusiasm was aroused, he could be a formidable protagonist for a cause.

[1983] brought another instalment of the NFA story. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee for the year saw some fierce discussion on the mention of films in the *Archives Bill*. This question, like that of private papers of statesmen mentioned earlier, was one of possibly overlapping authority and I had proposed dealing with it in the same way, by amicable discussion between the two Directors General. The meeting witnessed also the first open urging of complete independence for the archive. This provoked the Council, when I reported on the meeting to them, to declare flatly that independent status and physical relocation were simply non negotiable questions.

Singularly undeterred, the Committee firmly recommended to Council a report on the NFA by a British film archivist called Jeavons urging both the relocation of the archive to Sydney and the commissioning of an independent study of the whole question of film archiving in Australia. We assented to the study and the firm Nicholas Clark and Associates, on the Committee's recommendation, was commissioned. An interim report,

surveying the various institutions involved, was presented to the Committee on 28 February 1983.

To complete the story of this particular operation, I agreed to the NLA bearing the full cost of a second stage of the Clark consultancy, specifically on the NFA's operations. On 5 August Clark brought an interim report to Council which, to the fury of the Advisory Committee, recommended that the archive stay with us, in every sense of the phrase. There, perhaps one would have thought, the matter might have rested.

At this point there is extended comment on the asbestos affair, which resulted in a one day staff strike and an extended picket of the NLA building, which was finally lifted on 9 September 1983. Bryan was in Shanghai at this time.

Bryan Yates managed to telephone me, by no means an easy feat, [to say] the NFA affair had erupted again. On 12 September the Australian Film Institute had convened a meeting on the future of the archive, to which the NLA was studiously not invited, though some members of the Advisory Committee attended.

The meeting had passed a series of resolutions directed specifically against the recommendations of the Clark report, though that document had not yet been released by the Council into the public forum. I should have been prepared for such a development since, in the course of asking a question in the Senate, a few months earlier, Senator Hamer, from Victoria, had declaimed that 'the fight to establish a proper national film archive will be a long and tough one.'

Immediately following the 'public' meeting, it became known that a submission supporting the idea of an independent NFA had been made to the Prime Minister by Bob Hogg, then one of Hawke's advisers. It was also asserted that Mrs Hawke was an enthusiast for the same cause.

[NLA Council chair] Jim Forbes's reaction in Adelaide and mine in Shanghai were identical and immediate. I dictated a press release, with some difficulty, over the telephone and he telexed the Minister to precisely the same effect, i.e. expressing our confidence that no action would be taken about the NFA, or any other element of the Library, without prior consultation with the Council.

On 17 September the Minister brought together Bryan [Yates] and Bill [Thorn] and Don McMichael, the Head of the Department and a member of Council himself, together with Manfred Cross, the Deputy Chairman, so that he could be apprised of the facts. On 24 September, the Prime Minister announced that 'resources will be made available so that a national film archive is developed' which, though not specifying a separate institution, did not bode too well for the Library. Two days later, the Minister assured the Chairman that input from the Council would be taken into account in framing a submission to Cabinet.

Meantime, with me still in China, Bryan and Bill had to suffer a 'doing over' by Senator Peter Baume about our iniquitous treatment of the NFA, at the Senate Estimates Committee on 16 September. On 20 September the members of our Advisory Committee telexed the organisers of the meeting, conveying their endorsement of the resolutions

passed at it. It was a nice welcome home for me to attend a somewhat intemperate meeting of the Committee on 29 September!

I also had the unhappy duty of reprimanding very publicly Peter Burgis, the Head of our Sound Recording Section, for most improperly issuing a public statement setting out the disadvantages, similar to those claimed by the NFA, under which he asserted his Section suffered. Council was very angry at this further instance of disloyalty and firmly endorsed my actions.

On 11 October a full statement of the Council's position on the film archive, drafted by me and cleared by Jim, was presented to the Minister. In this, after pointing out that it was the NLA's initiative alone that had made possible any archiving of Australian films and any service from the collection, we simply set out the extra provision we sought, particularly in the Five Year Plan, to remedy the deficiencies in our NFA services to which such strident attention had been drawn. We noted that it would be considerably more expensive to set up a new institution than to provide us with these additional resources. While conceding that the Government had the power to prefer the former option, we emphasised the value to scholars in having, in the one institution and at the one location, all the source materials for Australian studies, irrespective of the media in which they were preserved. Above all, we urged that any action should be taken only after careful consideration.

Barry Cohen never called us to amplify or support in any way this statement and it remained, of course, confidential. It was unfortunate that this completely stymied any possible chance of our influencing public opinion, which was being continually inflamed against us by the film lobby and its supporters, both within the Parliament (and, indeed, within the Library) and outside. I have to say that I doubt if we could have had any effect even if we had been able to make our case publicly. Events moved well ahead of us. What we might have avoided was the charge that we let the NFA go without a murmur.

To complete the story, a draft Cabinet submission was circulated early in 1984 which recommended the setting up of a new institution which, to almost universal astonishment, was designed to cover not only films but also sound recordings. The Council's official comment on the draft was to recommend a full dress enquiry in the tradition of the Paton Committee of 1957.

Though this suggestion was not seriously taken up, the proposed new institution did not secure the universal support of the commenting Departments. However the time was well and truly past for any change of heart by the Government.

The Chairman was notified on 3 April that the Government had decided to establish the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). He and I had our one and only audience with the Minister on the topic on 5 April and, the same afternoon, at the Minister's invitation, attended the debate on the Bill in the House.⁷⁴⁵ The Minister attended a meeting of

⁷⁴⁵ The Minister had it in mind that we would sit behind him, indicating, or at least implying, our support for the Bill, but Jim, as an old Parliamentarian urged us instead into the Speaker's Gallery where a number of his Liberal colleagues came over to pass the time of day with him. The Minister did pay tribute to both Jim and me in his speech and, otherwise, the occasion was notable for Manfred Cross having the courage to stand up and criticise the legislation his own party was introducing.

Council the following day at which he took pains to assure us that the creation of the NFSA was 'an action which he had not initiated'. I was quite prepared to believe him. In fact, I seriously doubted if he had done anything except just let it all happen. I wondered if he had cared at all one way or the other.

It is interesting to speculate on the motives of the protagonists of the NFSA. There was certainly genuine concern, which, of course, we shared in full, at the deplorably slow rate at which we were managing to copy and preserve the old films and at the level of service we were able to give from the archive. On the other hand it was all too clear from seeing the Advisory Committee in action that there were interested parties who saw the possibilities of gaining more control over a new institution than they had been able to exert over the Library. As for the members of our own staff involved, Jim Forbes described them simply as Quislings. There was no doubt that they were deliberately fostering the move for independence and it would have been surprising if there had not been at least some element of personal ambition involved. Ray Edmondson and I had several discussions on the part he played. He was and is very knowledgeable and competent in the film area and certainly concerned to preserve Australia's film heritage and make it available. I could not accept his further proposition, freely admitted, that this concern outweighed any loyalty to the institution whose employee he was.

Well, there it was. As one member of Council put it, we had been 'rolled by experts'. There was a considerable measure of despondency, especially among the Australian Studies staff. I called a general staff meeting to urge that we not regard what had happened as a humiliation but see it simply as a decision made by a competent authority and accept that our duty lay in giving every support to the new sister institution.

That, of course, is just what followed. For a start, in addition to transferring immediately the 15 positions in the NFA, we provided temporary accommodation and two support staff for the new Director⁷⁴⁶ and, of course, we continued to house all the stock and services of the NFSA.⁷⁴⁷ Later we transferred a further three positions (being calculated as the central administrative load of the former NFA). The only request at which we boggled was that our Task Force, which had to be diverted frequently to meet crises in the film area, be surrendered also, in part. It took months of negotiation to sort out precisely the division of stock and services. It must be said that, despite receiving virtually immediately a massive increase in staff, NFSA did its best seemingly to prove that the Government had erred in its choice. It was quiet some time before it managed even to match what we had done with considerably slighter resources.

I had to suffer one further irritation before the end of the financial year, in the form of an article by Peter Biskup in the *Australian financial review*, which vigorously criticised

⁷⁴⁶ To the disappointment of our former officers, neither Ray Edmondson nor Peter Burgis was appointed to direct the NFSA. Instead the Department seconded the Deputy Director General of the AA, Colin Pinson [sic]. Colin did not last very long in the job and confided in me that he found Ray and Peter very difficult to handle. Colin was succeeded by yet another career Civil Servant, so that whatever personal ambitions were associated with leaving the NLA continued to be frustrated.

⁷⁴⁷ Separate accommodation was found for the NFSA by taking over the former Institute of Anatomy building. Barry Cohen revealed later, in one of his books, that his interest in the new institution was so intense that he thought the Institute building was the large copper roofed igloo housing the Academy of Science.

the NLA for megalomania in seeking to dominate the Australian library scene. ... it was really depressing to see that the old prejudices were still alive...I should say that Peter apologised to me handsomely some years later and volunteered the opinion that he had been mistaken in writing the article. I found I could not disagree with him on that!

The name *National Film and Sound Archive* was a logical extension from *National Film Archive* and was assigned by government in joining NFA to SR. Reviews of the Archive's brand begin in 1985 and each subsequent stage builds on its predecessor.

TIME IN OUR HANDS 1985

The first NFSA Advisory Committee interpreted its ministerial brief to include consideration of the name of the new institution:

As a unique institution the Archive cannot use any of the popularly established institutional concepts to describe itself. It will have to work to establish its own.

The name **National Film and Sound Archive** is an accurate but not sufficient description of its activities and role, and the word **archive** has musty connotations which are the antithesis of its real character.

Though the present name has a number of shortcomings we have not been able to improve on it and do not recommend a change. This may reflect the dilemma of establishing a popularly understood concept: there is not yet a single word which describes such an institution.⁷⁴⁸

NFSA ADVISORY COMMITTEE 1989

In June 1989, the NFSA Advisory Committee reviewed the question of the name, referring it on to its successor, the NFSA Interim Council - which (with wider terms of reference) replaced it in November 1989. The discussion paper⁷⁴⁹ canvassed the descriptors used by film archives and sound archives overseas – terms such as cinematheque, filmmuseum, phonotheque and institute – and on the basis of experience over the previous 5 years, it noted some “perceived” problems:

- the present name was too long, did not identify nationality, was media specific and didn't include radio, television and video,

⁷⁴⁸ National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee, *Time in Our Hands*, p 113

⁷⁴⁹ Agenda paper 89/24, 1 June 1989. It was prepared by the Deputy Director, which means it was presumably written by me, though I do not recall the circumstances which prompted its preparation.

- NFSA got confused with Australian Archives (AA) – an entirely different institution.

It proposed that a good institutional name should be short, self-explanatory, memorable, distinctive and free of confusing connotations. The Council, however, took the matter no further.

KEYSTONE RESEARCH STUDY – NOVEMBER 1998

The NFSA commissioned Keystone Corporate Positioning to carry out a scoping study “to provide an overview of its branding issues among staff, an audit of its brand application to printed materials and products, and strategic positioning. The findings also included research undertaken by Canberra Tourism to ascertain the Archive’s positioning among visitors.”⁷⁵⁰

Keystone’s report, possibly but not obviously revised by NFSA, was distributed in a package of “tender briefing documents”, dated 14 January 1999, calling for public tenders for a corporate positioning exercise.⁷⁵¹ A slightly abbreviated text is presented below: original presentation and capitalisation have been retained:

It is very clear, from [Keystone’s] research, that the current positioning and use of the brand name ‘National Film and Sound Archive’ are major obstacles to achieving the business objectives which the organisation has set for itself in the coming years

It is also clear that the present corporate identity would need to be changed to support a more effective positioning and provide a clear, concise visual expression of any new brand.

.....Since its inception, the Archive has found difficulty in gaining recognition of its name, its logo and an understanding of its vital role in preserving and presenting Australia’s cultural heritage.

It is now an opportune time for the organisation to consider ‘reinventing’ itself and setting its strategic objectives for the next 15-20 years...an investment in the future through repositioning will bring considerable benefits over the longer term.

CURRENT POSITIONING ISSUES

The organisation’s functional positioning today appears very much determined by the dominance of the word ‘Archive’ in its brand name and is characterised by

- low level of brand awareness

⁷⁵⁰ NFSA Corporate Positioning Brief, January 1999

⁷⁵¹ The report included input from Frank Small & Associates (later Taylor Nelson Sofres).

- low level of recognition of the valuable work performed
- limited recognition as a place of expertise for the collection and preservation of Australia's audio-visual heritage and home of a unique cultural collection
- positioned in the 1930s-1940s – does not present as a contemporary organisation
- does not have strong appeal to a broad audience
- appreciated by people who visit the Archive and or use its services

.....functional positioning of the Archive as a visitor attraction was characterised by:

- low appeal
- low awareness
- historic orientation
- hesitation, people do not understand what there is to see as an experience “What’s Inside?”
- positive experiences by those who had been there “great exhibitions” “interesting things”

The Archive's current 'emotional' positioning appears to be

- unknown/unrecognised
- expert/academic/exclusive
- respected/trustworthy
- musty/stuck in the past
- well known/ well liked

The Archive's corporate identity, particularly as expressed in the brand name and logo is clearly a handicap to the organisation achieving its objectives:

- there is a lack of awareness of the brand name
- the name is too complex and difficult to remember
- the name does not adequately describe the broad range of activities performed by the organisation
- the word 'archive' is considered 'musty', limiting interest in the organisation
- the name is easily confused with 'National Archive [sic] of Australia'
- the logo is complex and can be easily lost on printed materials
- there are no adequate systems and guidelines in place for effective use of the logo and for expression of the corporate identity

Input from Archive staff is in line with the above profile of the Archive's current positioning. However, further research would be required to clarify these issues.

FUTURE POSITIONING ISSUES

....It is vital that a corporate positioning be developed in conjunction with the organisation's Corporate Plan for the next 3 years. It is also important that a Strategic Marketing Plan be developed to ensure the new positioning and identity is effectively introduced.

The organisation needs a clear, recognisable, relevant and memorable brand name and corporate identity which must work at many levels:

- The broad Australian community (through its products and services)
- Visitors to Canberra headquarters
- The film, sound and television industry
- The tourism industry in Australia
- Australian Educational Institutions
- The Archive's professional peer group:
 - The National Archive [sic]
 - The National Library
 - The National Museum
 - National and International Peer Group Associations
 - Politicians, government
 - Potential sponsors/donors
 - The Internet

A particular challenge facing the Archive is that there is no single word in the English language which adequately describes the wide range of functions undertaken.

It is vital that any new brand name be capable of defining the Archive's position in the market through the building of brand associations.

The key functional dimensions which will define the organisation's future positioning appear to be:

- Collecting vital aspects of Australia's cultural identity through the media of film, sound and television together with related materials
- Preserving Australia's audio-visual heritage (past, present and future) through the expertise of staff and the use of advanced technical facilities
- Presenting this unique collection through exhibits, events, products and services, retail services, library services, memorabilia, Academic Outreach and the Internet
- Supporting Australia's film, television, radio and recording industry through the provision of historic materials and the collection of their works – and using the latest technology to achieve this.

....The dimensions which define the organisation's positioning in 'emotional' terms may be referred to as "brand attributes" – the thoughts and feelings people have when they think of a brand name.

While these have yet to be researched with customers and stakeholders, Archive staff have indicated the brand attributes they would like to see in fulfilment of their vision for the organisation:

- Unique/Australian
- Creative/Innovative
- Inclusive
- Customer driven
- Relevant/vital
- Trustworthy
- Timeless
- Expert
- Recognised

POSITIONING AND BRAND NAME RESEARCH

It is vital that any new corporate positioning and brand name be market-tested with key stakeholders:

- customers
- staff
- industry
- government, politicians
-

Focus groups are recommended to explore:

- current positioning
- desired future positioning
- new brand name proposals.....
-

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

A comprehensive communications strategy will be needed to effectively launch the new organisation and identity.

This would include a major launch event at the new Headquarters building and the Archive Foundation for April 1999 with media and public relations support.

In undertaking a major corporate change program, it is essential that staff be fully involved with the changes as they take place.

It is vital that a comprehensive two-way internal communications program be introduced to invite staff participation in the process and ensure that everyone is clear of their role in creating the new organisation.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES – PRODUCT AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

The Archive has an outstanding range of products and services which is expanding at a rapid rate

The launch of the new organisation would be greatly enhanced with the launch of a range of new products and services, many of which may be existing products repackaged to meet the strategic objectives of the organisation.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES – INTERNET DEVELOPMENT

The Internet will increasingly become a major strategic tool for the Archive as it seeks to more effectively carry its message to Australia and the world.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES – KOOKABURRA CLUB

The Kookaburra Club, with its 4500 members, represents a core support market for the organisation and should be a prime focus of future market development.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES – SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

The Archive, with its treasure-house of Australian culture could be presented in a very appealing way to potential corporate sponsors and benefactors.

The new corporate positioning and identity will be designed to make the organisation more appealing to these target groups.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES – CUSTOMER SERVICE

The feedback from those who use the services of the Archive appears to be very positive

It is vital; however, that customer service strategies be introduced to ensure that the interface of the organisation with customers at all levels fully supports the new positioning

CORPORATE POSITIONING BRIEF – JANUARY 1999

As part of the same package, the NFSA issued a covering brief, calling for submission of tenders by a closing date of 27 January 1999. Relevant extracts:

To coincide with the completion and public launch of the [NFSA's] new headquarters extension and expanded public exhibition space scheduled for June this year, and the forthcoming launch of its Foundation, the Archive has decided to review key elements of the organisation's branding, marketing and promotion.

There is a general consensus within the organisation and with external stakeholders that the Archive has not achieved high levels of recognition. Substantial anecdotal evidence suggests that the Archive's name is difficult and misleading in terms of the Archive's role and how we are perceived by existing and potential clients. Similarly the logo, without a verbal or written context, does not engender awareness, recall, interest or a positive response.

Many of the Archive's contemporary collections, programs and technology innovations are unknown to a wider audience including sponsors, business, educators, the film and sound industry, and the general public, which suggests that its current positioning is generating an incorrect perception among both existing and potential clients.

The [NFSA] invites tenders to (a) undertake the development of a corporate repositioning strategy and (b) provide input into the development of the Archive's marketing strategy based on market research with key client groups....

1 Qualitative research to:

- explore the Archive's current positioning and equity with existing and potential clients
- test new positioning, identity and communication concepts with existing and potential clients
- explore the needs of users and non-users to identify an understanding of current products and services and to identify potential services and products

2 Corporate identity development

- Development of a number of potential new brand names to be tested in the research
- Development of visual elements for the research in order to convey the attributes of the existing brand and of a potential new brand
- Development of the recommended concept into its various applications

3 Initial development of a marketing strategy

- Strategic recommendations for corporate positioning, brand name and corporate identity
- Implementation plan for the proposed corporate positioning
- Strategic input from market research findings into the development of a marketing strategy
-

Target audiences

The research sample should include the following market segments with geographical coverage of Canberra and Sydney:

- Canberra based users of the Archive
- Academic/education users and non-users
- Film and sound industry users and non-users
- Product and services users and non-users
- Business sector

KEYSTONE'S TENDER BID – JANUARY 1999

The text of the tender document is largely transplanted from Keystone's research study report of November 1998. However, pages 25 to 31 set out Keystone's proposed action and methodology:

Phase 1 – Testing of corporate identity concepts in qualitative research

Keystone will generate a range of brand names for testing during the individual in-depth discussion phase of the research. Keystone, during its work for the Archive late last year, examined many potential brand names and has already developed a short-list for consideration. The names generated will focus on finding a single word which, through the development of brand associations, can be built into an effective brand name over time. Alternative multi-word names will also be explored. A short list, which best represent the repositioned Archive, will be presented as logos for testing during the Group Discussion phase of the research.

Phase 2 - Masterbrand Development

Following market research testing of the new brand and logo, a new 'Masterbrand' would be prepared fully reflecting the desired new positioning of the organisation. A new Masterbrand must take into consideration the development of appropriate sub-brands (Kookaburra Club) and product brands (Moving Memories). A 'Branding Tree' will be developed to indicate these relationships.

[Phase 3] – Initial Development of a Marketing Strategy

The third phase of the tender requires initial development of a marketing strategy, specifically" strategic recommendations for corporate positioning, brand name and corporate identity, implementation plan for proposed corporate positioning, [and] strategic input from market research findings into the development of a marketing strategy.

Strategic recommendations: Keystone will make recommendations for a new brand name and a new (or perhaps modified) corporate identity which fully express the new positioning for the Archive. As discussed, research groups will be used to test brand name and corporate identity concepts. The recommended corporate identity will be

developed as a “Masterbrand” logotype with an indication of how the identity may be used in a selected number of applications. Keystone will also present a ‘branding tree’ indicating how the new Masterbrand will relate to existing sub-brands and product brands. The Keystone recommendations will form the basis for the further development of a comprehensive identity program at a later stage.

Implementation plan: Keystone would prepare a ‘Roadmap for the future’ for the Archive setting out clearly and precisely the steps required to implement the recommended new positioning (including broad timings). The roadmap would be presented as a framework on which to build a comprehensive marketing plan. It would include a discussion of the implications from the market research findings in the development of marketing strategy.

Indicative Roadmap Structure:

- Positioning the Archive for the future (the strategic direction in which the Archive must move to more effectively meet the needs of its stakeholders and target markets).
- The new corporate identity (how the new brand name and identity express the new positioning – broad guidelines for the use of the identity)
- Target markets and their needs (the underlying needs of key target segments – how the new positioning meets those needs)
- Peer Group/ Competitor (how the ‘new’ archive will sit amongst its peer group and competitors for Canberra attractions)
- Corporate Identity Rollout Strategy (how best to introduce the new identity across all applications)
- Marketing Communications Strategy (how best to communicate the ‘new positioning’ with limited resources to both internal and external audiences)
- Public Relations Strategy (how to use public relations to promote the new identity of the Archive)
- Product and Service Strategy (how existing products can be developed to better suit market needs – new product and service concepts suggested by research)
- Sales Strategy (which target markets offer the best prospects for achieving increased Archive revenues – how should this be achieved)
- Customer Service Strategy (how to align customer service with the new positioning)
- Acquisition and Retention Strategy (how to acquire and retain users of the Archive – how to develop the Kookaburra Club loyalty program)
- Promotions Strategy (effective use of promotional resources, including the launch of the new identity with the new building)
- Internet strategy (how the Internet can be used to support the new positioning: develop the look and feel’ of the site)
- Market Research/Information Strategy (assessing the need for ongoing research and customer feedback)

A more detailed indication of how Keystone would approach this task is contained in the document ‘Towards a Corporate Positioning’ – presented October 1998. (*This does not appear to be extant*).

CONTRACT BETWEEN KEYSTONE AND NFSA

There are two extant draft contracts – one dated 1 March 1999 and the other undated – covering provision of services by Keystone. According to KPMG,⁷⁵² there was never a contract defining deliverables, so it appears Keystone were working to an understood brief but not a contractually defined one. One of the extant contract drafts does contain a schedule of deliverables which includes pp 25-31 of Keystone's tender document (above), to carry out research and develop a marketing plan as defined in that document, so this may represent the range of NFSA's expectations.

TAYLOR NELSON SOFRES RESEARCH REPORT – MARCH 1999

The study involved eight in-depth interviews with “existing customers including academics from film and television, historians, film producers, music producers and manufacturers, museum curators” followed by “six group discussions covering industry and community users”. The objectives were: (a) to provide a map of needs of industry and community for the national collection of film and sound (b) to position **current** needs being fulfilled by NFSA, ideal way in which NFSA should meet industry and community needs, [and] ‘working’ and ‘alternate’ positioning against industry and community needs.

The study report was presented in graphical form and so the findings are difficult to summarise in text. Moreover, discussion seems to have been at least partly based on group reactions to “mood boards” – displays which are not reproduced in the report, so there is no context for the comments recorded in relation to them. The following appear to be the most salient points:

NFSA's image: The needs of the film and sound industry and the community are not being met because the owners of the collection are not driving its promotion and sharing.

Effect of Positioning Lines on Corporate Positioning: None of the names tested received strong endorsement across the customer groups. The idea of a ‘storyteller’ was supported but participants consistently warned against the adoption of an indigenous word. Myalla nevertheless, was liked as a sound. Almost all target groups supported a positioning statement that included national, and/or Australia, however national was more closely associated with status. The inclusion of such terminology adds the importance element missing in the mood boards of stimulation, adventure and the current positioning, and provides an ‘accessible’ description.

Effect of Names on Corporate Positioning: While the names tested did not resonate with all groups they did work to reinforce a certain positioning of the archive. ‘Applause’, ‘Kaleidoscope’, ‘Screen and Sound’ and ‘Screen Sound’ all work to position the Archive as more active and enthusiastic. ‘Masterworks’ emphasises the status of the Archive. ‘Australian Image’ keeps the Archive where staff currently see it. ‘Rewind’,

⁷⁵²

KPMG: Review of Keystone Corporate Positioning consultancy, February 2000

'Replay', and 'Playback' position the Archive as reasonably important but very passive. The combination of name and positioning line must center [sic] the position.

What Do The Products Do To The Corporate Positioning? Fox Studio project was unanimously supported by all participants in this study. Naturally with the proviso that [sic] Archive could not be compromised in any commercial way. It also had the powerful effect of drawing the Archive into a much more active positioning. Kookaburra Club has strongly placed the Archive in an affiliative position. Corporate Archiving had the opportunity to achieve some increased status by working with high profile corporate companies. The NFSA cafe was seen as quite sophisticated, almost 'left bank' and added a professional dimension. The other products added a discovery element to the brand. The products as a suite provide depth and tone to the recommended positioning.

Key issues: All audience groups see a need to change [sic] – the challenge will be to maintain the 'good' elements of the current positioning, move in the optimum direction and provide an effective platform for increasing recognition, status, appeal, effectiveness.

A key issue facing NF&SA is whether to adopt the positioning of a Museum or Collection or to maintain its focus on being an 'archive' in its most rigid sense. A museum or collection is where a set of cultural objects and/or high art are collected, preserved, defined and arrayed by experts in various environments (such as great art, plays, books, music and now film, sound and television). These are seen as accessible to experts and community alike. An archive is generally seen as a rather 'flat and depthless' specialist grouping which, while authentic, is inaccessible.

The challenge....has been to find a way of bridging the gap between the collection, its current users and its future development. To effectively move the Archive towards a new positioning, a positioning line reflecting enhanced status and a more accessible definition of its activities is needed. This should be coupled with a memorable and unique marketing name that draws the perception forward towards the ideal positioning. An integrated communication strategy will be critical to successfully moving forward while reinforcing key attributes and reassuring key clients.

SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTER 12 MAY 1999

The Director, Ron Brent, presented Keystone's – and his – recommendations to Minister Peter McGauran for approval. The essential rationale is:

The NFSA has a name that is:

- easy to confuse with the National Archives of Australia
- hard to remember, easy to get wrong

Following a tender process, the NFSA commissioned the Keystone/Cato consortium to survey the marketplace, and to design and develop a repositioning/rebranding

strategy, as necessary. The process has involved detailed, qualitative market research of existing and potential customers of the Archive, development of a new strategic plan for the Archive, and the associated development of a strategic marketing plan, of which a new name and logo for the Archive are key components.

This has resulted in a proposal that the Archive have two names:

- a formal title that would be *The National Collection of Screen and Sound*
- a marketing title that would be *ScreenSound Australia*

The extended descriptive form of the name, *The National Collection of Screen and Sound*, will be used to [sic] both nationally and internationally....either on its own or to clarify the status and role of *ScreenSound Australia* as required. Both will appear on the organisation's stationery. In advertising and in public presentations...only the short form of the name will be used.

The proposed new name is

- inclusive, national and unique
- easy to say and remember
- reflects to the world that the collection is comprised of film, radio and television, video and all aspects of sound recordings

...the new positioning will support the increased public focus of our strategic plans for extended access services.

KEYSTONE'S BRIEFING TO THE COUNCIL 17 MAY 1999

A briefing document summarises its recommendations and the results of the TNS research study, canvasses the naming alternatives, provides details of the intended launch, and sets out the following goals and objectives for the marketing strategies:

- Highlight government support for the valuable work of the NFSA (including details of new technical facilities)
- Build industry and stakeholder appreciation of the introduction of new identity & positioning
- Establish the new identity through developing, testing, launching and communicating the new image/identity
- Build a profile for the repositioned Archive, nationally and internationally
- Increase patronage and support by promoting NFSA's services to clients, the Government and industry

- Help build a successful Foundation to ensure the ongoing success and viability of the organisation (this will involve promotion of the new identity and building a wider understanding and knowledge of the organisation, particularly with target groups)
- Improve recognition of what NFSA has achieved to date and the value of the organisation to Australia and Australian culture
- Build staff understanding of and commitment to the change through open, relevant, targeted and consistent communications
- Emphasise the importance of ongoing consultations with staff, industry, customers and the community
- Satisfy staff information needs in relation to the new positioning
- Improve staff awareness and inspire commitment to the organisation by creating a new and exciting identity and positioning
- Celebrate staff and NFSA achievements

THE LAUNCH - 21 JUNE 1999

Simultaneous with the launch of the new brand on this date, a press kit and other documents were released. It majors on the new building and facilities, and the Archive's activities and capabilities. There is no single statement of the rationale for the rebranding or what it presaged for the future, but the relevant excerpts from these documents follow:

We hope to increase our profile over the next 12 months, and we have started on that path already with an upgraded and redesigned internet site. A Foundation to support ScreenSound Australia's work will be set up later in the year..... Our collection holdings are now available on line. *(Circular letter from Ron Brent to members of parliament)*

One of Australia's most important and unique cultural institutions has a new identity...it is the first step in a long-term effort to increase recognition of its work, and more importantly, to take it successfully into the 21st century....with the launch of our new identity, the aim is now to build on our leading status in the field of preservation and be even more relevant and accessible to all Australians in the future. A new identity and positioning is a natural step from where we started many years ago as a small part of the National Library of Australia....our new identity not only reflects the past, but the present – a new identity and a move forward to also save and collect the present generation of screen and sound heritage for the future. *(Statement by Ron Brent in press release "ScreenSound Australia premiere")*

Thank you for joining us in celebrating the launch of ScreenSound Australia, the National Collection of Screen and Sound. We are now positioned for the future – to continue and improve our valuable work in preserving and sharing our unique screen and sound heritage. Part of that move forward will be a focus on strategic alliances with industry and business. A ScreenSound Foundation will be established later this year to foster involvement of people and businesses from all sectors of the community to

support the valuable work we do. Tonight was really only the start. We have many months of development and planning ahead to make our new name count. We will be an organisation that truly reflects our new positioning, through our service, staff and collection. (*Letter from Ron Brent given to guests departing the launch.*)

To mark the launch of ScreenSound Australia....a special exhibition of Australian screen and sound highlights will go on show. Set to open in October 1999, the Treasures exhibition includes unique items from ScreenSound Australia's National Collection, stretching back to the first film made in Australia – the 1996 Melbourne Cup....the exhibition will be presented in ScreenSound Australia's newly renovated South Gallery...provides much more space for visitors to enjoy the national collection of screen and sound. (*Item in the press kit*)

SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA ANNUAL REVIEW 1998/99

The Archive's name was changed to ScreenSound Australia, the National Collection of Screen and Sound, on 21 June 1999. Its role as Australia's national audiovisual archive remains unchanged....[the] completion of the repositioning and renaming of the organisation as ScreenSound Australia to update the organisation's image and to increase its marketing potential – reflect [sic] the range of audiovisual materials collected and made available. (*Excerpts from pages 4 and 6*)

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVE, SUMMER 1999-2000

The name change was designed to alleviate problems associated with the old name. Many of our functions, like the preservation of Australian television, were simply unacknowledged in the old name. We were also continually confused with other archives, especially the National Archives of Australia. As our collections database went on line to the world, we believed that there was a need for 'Australia' in the title. We were also looking for a name that would appeal more to young people as we moved into the 21st century.... the name change was designed to make us *more* accessible to wider audiences. It did not in any way signal a change of direction or a corporatisation. (*Editorial by Ron Brent in the first issue of the renamed newsletter – previously simply titled "The News"*)

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVE, SPRING 2000

You may have noticed in our last newsletter and this one that we are using our formal name, *National Screen and Sound Archive*. This name contains the two important descriptors of the organisation, namely *National* and *Archive*. We are the national

organisation in our field and we are an archive. Our marketing name and logo, *ScreenSound Australia*, is a contraction of the formal name. It replaces the previous shorthand for our organisation, namely NFSA (an acronym meaningless to the broader public and difficult to recall). This branding is another step in a long-term effort to increase recognition of our work among a wider audience (such as into the educational and youth markets). We are still the same national audiovisual archive....But we now have a name that reflects that role more accurately in a way that will help raise awareness among all our audiences, especially younger audiences. *(Panel on back page)*

SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA ANNUAL REVIEW 2000/2001

In 1999 the organisation changed its name to ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive, to reflect contemporary and future directions *(Except from page 5)*

To Harrison Bryan and others, from Allan Fleming 14 Nov 1983, in response to Bryan's letter of 13 Oct 1983 and the attached information kit NLA: MS 9862 Series 1 Box 1

Thank you for letting me have the material on film archive and sound recordings.... Did you send a copy of the material to Gordon [Bryant]? He is well on our side, and can of course recall the time when I lured most members of the Council down to Sydney to look over the Cinesound Movietone collection and premises to give weight to the battle to get the films....he personally took part in the efforts to save what might otherwise have been lost, when the film industry as a whole wasn't doing much about it.

...I can recall that on my tour abroad several well known "independent" archives told me (contrary to our film specialists' reports) that they wished they were linked to a bigger brother. It's in my report.

....if someone who really knew something of the [Cinesound Movietone] story were able to produce from the files the points relevant to the present argument (NLA really went to town to rescue the film for posterity; if it hadn't been for NLA etc, steps taken immediately to assess and copy nitrate; steps to get proper vault built; did any section of the film industry try to hop in and save it? Etc) I could buy in more effectively. I wonder whether Ted could recall main points from the overseas report and the Cinesound negotiations and vault planning....

The same would apply to Sound Recording. I took action to get the collection from X..again, the theme would be "But for the NLA...."

I hope the signs are that the astonishingly unscrupulous campaign via media is seen through in high places, in spite of old friendships.

To Bjorn Tell from Allan and Margaret Fleming Aug 1985 NLA: MS 9862

Harry had the misfortune to have a minister who was in private life a small retailer and I don't think he ever rose above that. Poor Harry got very little understanding or backing. They stole the film and sound collection from him to please a well known Labor publicist and film producer, then found that while they wouldn't give Harry enough money to run the two things adequately, suddenly there were a few millions and more staff at a much higher level. It will be very interesting to see how Hortin [sic] copes. I met him at Jean's [Whyte] about 18 months ago when he was state librarian and Jean was (and still is) a member of the [National] Library council...

Archives be in it

We can understand why many aspects of the proposals seem reasonable: that the film archives should be grouped with the film commission; there should then be disagreement as to where it should be located; that the Film Commission should not be so interested in taking responsibility for the film lending service which renders service throughout Australia...

However it seems much less reasonable that the organisational arrangement which has resulted in a film archive collection worth fighting over; which was created by the interest and concern of people who were not in the industry; which has battled... often with little industry assistance or Government generosity in tough times; which has benefited from the personal efforts and concern in negotiation and contacts of the very experienced people who have headed the Library, and of the members of the Council who have had high status in the community (contrary to the impression being given that one or two overworked officer film buffs has done the battling...

There IS a case for the Film Comm to take it over. That case is publicised by Australia's leading advertising man and publicist, (illegible) with newspaper columns at his disposal, and abetted by an employee film buff of the NLA who without approval or support of his Head or the Council (including 2 members of the **** parlt) denigrates the NLA role in creating the Archive, film, and made substantial vaults and all, begun with admirable foresight by the NLA before he was even on the scene, and not explaining the astonishing suggestion that the NLA has failed (he is blameless and its chief archives official, and yet the NLA has produced (presumably aimlessly) a collection of world standing and well worth fighting over . And as suggested by the NLA Last Film Search (presumably paid for by and not conducted in defiance of the NAL) the hardest part – the decades of rescue against a fair amount of indifference ... are over. A well judged time to grab.

...when for each specialist group their special interest is the top one. By hiving off bits the Govt would presumably wish to deal directly itself with more interest groups...

We do not think the correctness of the film archive remaining with the NLA is just a matter of bureaucratic cluckiness. Somewhere in the country there should be a place where the record of our national existence can be seen as a whole – not requiring the scholar looking up politics in Canb, law in Perth, economics in Syd, film in Melb (or maybe if Melb and Syd can't agree, in Albury/Wodonga) science in Brisbane etc. If such elements of knowledge had not been pushed into compartments where they did not impinge naturally on one another, and became the special domain of their own buffs and experts, we could have escaped, for example, many of the disasters of environment. Film archives belong in a human existence context much wider than films. We do hope you keep it that way.

From Inside Canberra newsletter 13 Apr 1984

FILM INDUSTRY'S COUP

The Australian film industry, thanks to the political skills of Phillip Adams and Bob Hogg, have pulled off a major coup with the announcement of the Minister for Home Affairs, Barry Cohen, of the establishment of a National Film and Sound Archive. The existing film and sound archives presently located in the National Library of Australia in Canberra will be handed over to the new organisation which will soon have separate premises from the National Library. Morale at the Library has slumped and the Council of the Library (whose chairman is none other than the president of the Liberal Party, Dr Jim Forbes) is stunned. It could be argued that the management of the Library has not been nearly entrepreneurial enough (if at all) about its magnificent collection. The film industry has been fuming for years about the difficulty of getting its hands on the archives. Finally Phillip Adams has turned the trick. As Mr Cohen's announcement said: "The new National Film and Sound Archive will be more accessible to the public AND THE FILM INDUSTRY." (Our emphasis).

....BUT WHAT'S THE PRICE?

A key question of course is how much the film industry will pay to the taxpayer for use of this archival material for commercial purposes, or indeed, whether it will pay anything at all. The National Film and Sound Archive will initially be an office within Mr Cohen's Department and will report to him. A National Film and Sound Archives Advisory Committee will be appointed "to develop planning for the future development of the Archive." Our betting is that Phillip Adams will be on this Committee. Many people at the National Library and members of the Council, believe that the film industry has managed a break and enter job on the National Estate. Their concern is that if political muscle can prise from the Library the film and sound archives (incidentally this will be the only film AND sound archive in the world), what is next. The National Library holds an astonishingly valuable collection, which should a lively entrepreneur get access to, would be worth a fortune.

From Emeritus Professor Jean Whyte to the editor of the ABC journal "24 Hours", 15 July 1991 NLA: MS 9862

I was appalled to read Humphrey McQueen's article, "Conan the Librarian" in the July 1991 issue of your journal....it is a series of gossipy assertions, all unproven, and many close to libellous.

... The article is full of sly innuendoes – Harrison Bryan did not cause the fire, and no attempt is made to determine whether the picketing of the Library had any effect at all on the removal of the asbestos. As for the transfer of the Film and Sound Archive – I was on the Council and it was a long and complicated argument. I still think that the wrong decision was made by the government, but such decisions are not ipso facto wrong.

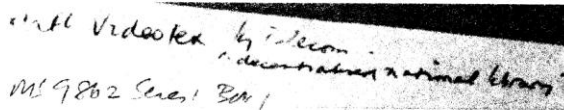
From Warren Horton, Director General, NLA to Allan Fleming 17 October 1991

... I can understand your annoyance and frustration over the National Film and Sound Archive incident, but I'm afraid that is life and there is little we can do about it. Their Director, Graham Gilmour is scrupulous in every public comment but some of his Senior Staff are busy re-writing history.....

(Fleming has added a handwritten note: "I only wanted to make sure NLA record was correct and noted for future reference.")

Next page:

Personalised circular dated 13 October 1983 as sent to Allan Fleming, with attached information kit. (The handwritten notes at the bottom are Fleming's) NLA: MS9862 Series 1 Box 1



National Library of Australia

Letters to

- Ministers
- members Brit
- Press

Dear Allan

You will be aware of recent well-publicised suggestions that the National Film Archive and the Sound Recording Collection should be separated from the National Library. The Library is concerned that much of this comment could be interpreted as promoting sectional interests. It is clear that even some Senators (Hansard, pp. 1330-1335) are unaware of the National Library's historic and current role as custodian of the total record of Australian culture and development as expressed not only through books but through diverse collections of manuscripts, pictures, maps, sound recordings and films. The Library has a total view of the many-sided national record, and a total commitment to its preservation and use in the national interest.

In response to a request by the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, Mr Barry Cohen, the National Library Council has considered very carefully the future of the National Film Archive and has conveyed its views to the Minister. Naturally these recommendations are confidential and the aim of this Information Kit is to present the facts.

The Library is anxious that you, as an interested person, should be aware of the role it has played in the development of the national film and sound collections, whose future is now under discussion.

We hope you may feel disposed to make known your views on the Library's role in the future of the National Film Archive and the Sound Recording Collection. Your letters to Ministers, Members of Parliament and to the national press could play a valuable part in ensuring the widest and most informed discussion of these matters.

Yours sincerely

HARRISON BRYAN
Director-General

[illegible]

The following nine people participated in the oral history project *and* were happy to have their participation recorded and acknowledged. A further four participants wished to remain confidential and so are not listed here. In fairness to all, *none* of the participants are linked to the code letters used in the oral history interviews (Chapter 4). Following each person's name is their background and reason for their selection. A note on my relationship with each is in italics.

Ian Bertrand (Melbourne)

Author, researcher and academic, former chair of Archive Forum; a user of the Archive since the 1970s

I have known Ina as user of the NFA and NFSA and as a colleague in various academic and film related contexts. I worked closely with her during her period as chair of Archive Forum.

Anthony (Tony) Buckley AM (Port Douglas)

Film producer, film historian, writer, former member of the NFSA Advisory Council; connection with the Archive in various capacities since the 1960s

Tony's film "Forgotten Cinema", which I first saw on television in 1967, was a factor in my choice of the NLA as an employer. I have known him since about 1969, and through his various roles as a contributor to, and user of, the NFSA collection, as a Council member, and as a historian.

Michael Cordell (Sydney)

Film producer, former member of the NFSA/ScreenSound Australia Advisory Council, "Last Film Search" field officer; connection with the Archive since 1981

I have known Michael since he joined the NFA as Last Film Search field officer in 1981, and in his later role as a Council member.

Ian Gilmour (Canberra)

SR/NFSA senior staff member, technical specialist and researcher; active in IASA, AMIA and other professional forums; one of the NFSA's original staff who transferred from the NLA

Ian is a long term fellow staff member in the NLA and NFSA. I have known him since the 1980s.

Tom Jeffrey AM (Sydney)

Film producer, member and former chair of FBIOHG, member of Archive Forum, active in film industry professional associations and forums; prominent film industry figure with a connection to NFSA since 1980s

I expect that I first met Tom sometime in the 1970s; after leaving the NFSA in 2001 I was an intermittent member of FBIOHG.

Tina Kaufman (Sydney)

Journalist, former editor of "Filmnews" and current columnist for "Metro", member of the Sydney Film Festival Board: prominent in film culture circles since the 1970s, and an observer and documenter of NFSA

My first contact with Tina would have been sometime in the 1970s, during the currency of "Filmnews" and the Sydney Filmmakers Cooperative. Her continuing interest in the NFSA was as a commentator and possibly occasional user.

Donna Meredith (Sydney)

Principal of Keystone Corporate Positioning Pty Ltd, involved with the NFSA rebranding and repositioning 1998-2000

I first met Donna at the outset of the first Keystone consultancy. There was no further contact after Keystone's relationship with the NFSA ceased.

Peter Pagac (Sydney)

Principal of Screensound Pty Ltd

My first contact with Peter was, if memory serves, after I had left the NFSA, and sent him a copy of my 2002 article on the rebranding.⁷⁵³ I subsequently visited him in Sydney and

⁷⁵³ Edmondson, "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Governance, Guardianship and the Screensound Saga."

learned the full extent of his problems with the NFSA. We maintained contract for perhaps two years after that.

Andrew Pike OAM (Canberra)

Principal of Ronin Films Pty Ltd; historian, author and researcher; film producer; founding president of Friends of the NFSA; former member of ScreenSound Australia Advisory Council; current member of the NFSA Governing Board.

I first met Andrew in 1969 when his research on Cinesound began. He has worn many NFSA-related hats over the years. From the outset we have shared a strong interest in Australian film history and in the progress of the NFA and NFSA.

The survival rate of Australian films and sound recordings from the earliest decades – up to 1930 – is poor by the standards of many other developed countries. For example, it is estimated that only five per cent of Australian-produced films from that period now survive (compare that to the survival rate of Australian literature from the same period). One reason for this is that the NLA did too little, too late to search and acquire when much more of this material was still extant.

The following is an **indicative** list of material that was lost, compromised or rejected from 1945 onwards. It is illustrative only and drawn partly from memory: research into surviving records would lengthen and sharpen the list.

1 The fate of the original collection of the NHFR remains unknown. Further research into surviving CNL records may help establish whether or not any of it survives in the present NFSA collection.

2 35mm nitrate films copied to 16mm acetate, and originals destroyed, during the 1950s and 1960s included *Possum Paddock* (1921), *The Ross and Keith Smith Flight from England to Australia* (1919), *Sunshine Sally* (1922), *Officer 666* (1916), *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1916), many issues of *Westralian News* (1940s) and perhaps hundreds more. Many of the silent (pre-1930) films were copied on printers optically adjusted for post-1930 sound films, which meant that part of top, bottom and left hand side of the original image is now missing in the surviving 16mm copy. 16mm copies are visually much inferior to 35mm, even when well made.

3 The entire personal output of silent film producer/director Franklyn Barrett (about 15 feature films), stored in his garage, was carted to the local tip after the garage collapsed. Having made the contact, the NLA had failed to follow up soon enough.

4 Similarly, the entire oeuvre of silent producer/director Beaumont Smith (about 15 feature films) was destroyed by a local Sydney fire brigade about six months *before* Rod Wallace had tracked down Smith's brother, who had been storing the material. Wallace had been single-handedly writing letters to every fire brigade in Australia in search of nitrate film – inflammable goods which brigades were sometimes asked to destroy safely.

5 In December 1968, the NLA's nitrate film collection was culled. About 2000 reels were loaded into a dump truck and consigned to the rubbish tip in an exercise lasting about two hours. The material was not viewed or checked off against an inventory: the decision to keep or discard was based on the title on the can label (if there was one). About 850 cans were retained.

6 Based on experience of nitrate film stock, it can be confidently assumed that some nitrate film would have been lost through decomposition over the decades; records began to be kept only in the 1970s. The quantum is unknown, but until the current nitrate vaults were opened in the 1980s, the collection was kept in a succession of temporary locations, none of them climate controlled.

7 A major part of the national syndicated radio program libraries was dumped as roadfill in the 1960s because there was no archive to receive it. The quantum is not recorded but it would have amounted to tens, possibly hundreds, of thousands of discs. These were transcription recordings of radio serials, dramas, variety and other shows from the 1930s to the 1950s which had been made redundant by changes to radio programming following the advent of television. Continued storage was commercially unsustainable. They now lie under Sydney's Warringah Expressway. It is probable that much program material held in the radio industry on audiotape instead of disc was wiped, again because there was no archive to express interest. The NLA was not equipped to receive professional videotapes until well into the 1970s so much early television material may also have suffered the same fate.

8 On various occasions from the 1970s onwards, nitrate film of overseas origin was "repatriated" to film archives in other countries, on the basis that the NLA or NFSA did not have sufficient budget to preserve them. By international standards in the profession this was an unusual act, not copied by NFSA's peers. In effect, it was an impoverishment of the national heritage because overseas films have heavily influenced Australia: it is important to know what films were circulated here and what effect they had. Sometimes the best known copies of overseas films are the ones that survived in Australia: examples are some of the earliest films of Charlie Chaplin and 20th Century Fox classics of the 1940s, all of which were repatriated to the USA.

9 Much of the growing audio disc and acetate film collection accumulated during the 1970s and 1980s was stored on salvaged shelving in the NLA's overflow storage: an insecure, vermin-infested former factory building⁷⁵⁴. The intake of material had completely outstripped the capacity of the small NFA and SR staff to examine and accession it. It is impossible to know what might have been lost or stolen: almost certainly some of the collection went missing.

10 On the same logic, the huge deletions of non-Australian vinyl recordings, periodicals, films and other materials from the NFSA in 2000 reflected an ideological as much as a practical stance, since reversed. Only a small proportion of that material has subsequently been re-acquired.

11 During the COMAT project of 1991-1993, acquisition of collection material by the NFSA largely ceased. It is not clear whether that gap in activity was later fully retrieved or whether some material was permanently missed.

⁷⁵⁴ The old Government Printing Office (OGPO) building at Kingston, ACT. The building was semi-derelict and impossible to secure, and fire authorities advised that if it caught fire it would be futile to try and extinguish it. A fire was actually averted by an alert staff member who happened to be present when the old electrical wiring short-circuited, and moved with presence of mind to cut the circuit.

12 Some material which should have come to the NFSA was instead diverted to other institutions. The Hans Wetzel collection of vintage equipment and memorabilia was rejected by the NLA in the 1980s on the grounds that such items did not fit the definition of “library material” in the Act. During the AFC period (2003-2008), the owner of the Val Morgan company archive was advised to donate it to another institution because the AFC could not be trusted to deal with it ethically.

- Business Miscellany*. London: Economist, 2006. Print.
- "Preserving Records [1]." Leading article. *Canberra Times* 26 September 1983. Print.
- "Preserving Records [2]." Leading article. *Canberra Times* 7 October 1983. Print.
- Aaker, David A. *Building Strong Brands*. Simon and Schuster, 2002. Print.
- Abbott, Andrew. *The System of Professions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. Print.
- Accenture. "Mergers & Acquisitions: Irreconcilable Differences." (2000). 7 January 2011.
- Acerro, Heather. "The Librarian Stereotype in Current Films." New York: New York University, 2001. 10. Print.
- Altman, Wilf. "What's the Point of Management Consultants?" *IET Collective Inspiration*. 9 July 2008.
- Alvey, Brian. "An Interview with Marty Neumeier." 2003. Print.
- Amon, Faith Sophie. "Organisational Change Communication, Identity, Image and Culture: The Case of Care International." University of Florida, 2004. Print.
- Andersson, Johan, and Emma Torngren. "Behind the Scene of Corporate Reputation: A Study of How PR Consultants Seek to Shape the Perception of Organisations ". Uppsala University, 2009. Print.
- Anonymous. "The Birth of the Friends of the National Museum - the Screaming Baby's First Year." *Friends of the National Museum* 10 2 (1999). Print.
- . "Branding: An Interview with a PR Pro." *Information Outlook* 7 4 (2003): 26-28. Print.
- . "Would You Buy SLA?" *Information Outlook* 5 3 (2001): 32-34. Print.
- Archive Forum. *Cinderella Betrayed: The Shoe Won't Fit*, 2004. Print.
- . "A Time for Review." 2003. Print.
- Archive Forum, et al. "Independent Statutory Authority Status for the National Film and Sound Archive." Canberra, 2006. Print.
- Askim, Jostein, et al. "Implmentation of Merger: Lessons from the Norwegian Welfare Bureaucracy." *ECPR Standing Group on Regulatory Governance Biennial Conferencenon (Re) Regulation in the Wake of Neoliberalism: Consequences of Three Decades of Privatisation and Market Liberalisation*. Ed. Print.
- Auster, Paul. *The Book of Illusions : A Novel*. 1st ed. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2002. Print.
- Australian Capital Television. *The Australian Image*. 1988.
- Australian Film Commission. *Stage 2 Directions Paper*. Print.
- Australian Government. "Creative Nation - Commonwealth Cultural Policy." Canberra, 1994. Print.
- Australian Society of Archivists. *Keeping Archives*. 3rd ed, 2008. Print.
- Biskup, Peter and Maxine K Rochester eds. *Australian Library History: Papers from the Second Forum on Australian Library History, Canberra, 19-20 July 1985*. 1985. Print.
- Balnaves, John, and Peter Biskup. *Australian Libraries*. Second edition ed. London: Clive Bingley, 1975. Print.
- Banks, Robert. "The Vocation of the Public Servant " *Private Values and Public Policy*. Ed. Robert Banks. Canberra: Zadok Institute, 1983. 95-113. Print.
- Barber, Lynden. *The Australian* 28 June 2002. Print.
- . "Row Heats up over Film and Sound Archive " *The Australian* 10 Feb 2004. Print.
- Barrett, Mark. "A Stakeholder Approach to Responsiveness and Accountability in Non-Profit Organisations " *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 17 (2001): 36-51. Print.

- Baskin, Jonathan Salem. *Branding Only Works on Cattle : The New Way to Get Known (and Drive Your Competitors Crazy)*. 1st ed. New York: Business Plus, 2008. Print.
- Baxter, John. *The Australian Cinema*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1970. Print.
- Benedict, Karen M. *Ethics and the Archival Profession*. Society of American Archivists, 2003. Print.
- Bertrand, Ina, ed. *Cinema in Australia: A Documentary History*. Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1989. Print.
- Biskup, Peter. "Fierce Wrangle over Movie Treasure Trove." *Australian Financial Review* 30 March 1984: 40-41,46. Print.
- . *Library Models and Library Myths: The Early Years of the National Library of Australia* Historical Bibliography Monograph: History Project Inc, 1983. Print.
- Biskup, Peter, and Doreen Goodman. *Australian Libraries*. Third edition ed, 1982. Print.
- Biskup, Peter, and Margaret Henty, eds. *Library for the Nation*. Canberra: Australian Academic and Research Libraries, 1991. Print.
- Blackett, Tom. "Picking a Brand's Name Is an Important Process." *Brandchannel* (2006). 22 May 2006.
- Boland, Michaela. "Dalton Shock Switch to ABC." *Financial Review* 13 Jan 2006. Print.
- Borchardt, Dietrich. "Ethics of Librarianship." *ALIAS: Australia's Library, Information and Archives Services: An Encyclopaedia of Practice and Practitioners*. Ed. Bryan, Harrison. Sydney: Library Association of Australia, 1988. 206-09. Print.
- Borde, Raymond. *Les Cinematheques*. Paris: Editions L'Age d'Homme, 1983. Print.
- Borde, Raymond, and Freddy Buache. *La Crise de Cinematheques et du Monde*. Paris: Editions de L'Age d'Homme, 1997. Print.
- Bourne, Lynda. "Project Relationships and the Stakeholder Circle." *PMI Research Conference 2006*. Ed. Print.
- Bradley, Kevin. *Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects*. IASA, 2004. Print.
- Braun, Thom. *The Philosophy of Branding : Great Philosophers Think Brands*. London ; Sterling, VA: Kogan Page, 2004. Print.
- Bridge, Carl. *A Trunk Full of Books: History of the State Library of South Australia and its Forerunners* Netley, SA: Wakefield Press in association with the State Library of South Australia 1986. Print.
- Bridges, Nancye. *Wonderful Wireless*. Sydney: Methuen Australia, 1983. Print.
- Brownlow, Kevin. *The Parade's Gone By*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1968. Print.
- Bryan, Harrison. *[Harrison Bryan Addresses National Library Staff]*. Rec 10 April 1984.
- . *Harrison Bryan Interviewed by Peter Biskup*. Rec 7 December 1989, Canberra. CD.
- . *No Gray Profession*. Adelaide: Auslib Press, 1994. Print.
- Buckley, Anthony. *Behind a Velvet Light Trap: A Filmmaker's Journey from Cinesound to Cannes*. Melbourne: Hardie Grant Books, 2009. Print.
- . *Forgotten Cinema*. 1966. Film.
- Buono, Anthony F, James L Bowditch, and John W Lewis. "When Cultures Collide: The Anatomy of a Merger." *Human Relations* 38 5 (1985): 477-500. Print.
- Burgis, Peter. *Report on overseas study tour*. July 1982. Print.
- Burleigh, Nina. *Stranger and the Statesman: James Smithson, John Quincy Adams, and the Making of America's Greatest Museum, the Smithsonian*. HarperCollins, 2003. Print.
- Burmester, Clifford Amandus. *National Library of Australia: Guide to the Collections*. 4 vols, 1974-1982. Print.
- . *Notes on Acquisition Policy and Programme 1963-1968*: National Library of Australia, 1963. Print.
- Butler, Ivan. *'To Encourage the Art of the Film' : The Story of the British Film Institute*. London: Hale, 1971. Print.

- Buttrose, Ian. *The Friends of the Public Library of South Australia: A Short History of the Society with a Brief Description of the More Important Books Presented to the Public Library of South Australia, 1933-1949* Adelaide: [The Society], 1950. Print.
- Caldwell, Niall G. "The Emergence of Museum Brands." *International Journal of Arts Management* 2 3 (2000): 28-34. Print.
- Cannon, Judy. "Film, Sound Archives in State of Siege." *Canberra Times* 16 November 1983. Print.
- Cantwell, John D. *The Public Record Office, 1838-1958*. London: HM Stationery Office, 1991. Print.
- Cherchi Usai, Paolo. *Burning Passions : An Introduction to the Study of Silent Cinema*. London: British Film Institute, 1994. Print.
- Cherchi Usai, Paolo, et al. *Film Curatorship*. Vienna: Oesterreichisches Filmmuseum, 2008. Print.
- Chia, Joylene. "Relationship Management: Developing Relationship Parameters Critical to the Effective Management of Relationships between Public Relations Consultants and Their Clients." University of South Australia, 2005. Print.
- Clark, Timothy, and Robin Fincham, eds. *Critical Consulting: New Perspectives on the Management Advice Industry*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. Print.
- Clifton, Rita. "Surviving Enron: The Real Value of Branding." *Market Leader* Autumn 2002 (2002): 1. Print.
- Cochrane, Peter, ed. *Remarkable Occurrences: The National Library of Australia's First 100 Years 1901-2001*. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001. Print.
- Cohen, Barry. *The Life of the Party*. Penguin, 1988. Print.
- Cole, John Y. *A Chronological History of the Library of Congress*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1979. Print.
- Collins, D. *Hollywood Down Under: Australians at the Movies - 1896 to the Present Day*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1986. Print.
- Collins, James C., and Jerry I. Porras. *Built to Last : Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. New York: HarperBusiness, 1994. Print.
- Colliver, Spencer. "To Whom and for What? Exploring Further the Notion of 'Accountability' in the Public Service." *Private Values and Public Policy*. Ed. Banks, Robert. Canberra: Zadok Centre, 1983. 47-61. Print.
- Colyer, Edwin. "Churches Put Their Faith in Branding." *Brandchannel.com* (2005). <www.brandchannel.com>.
- Costa, Jose Manuel. "Two Academic Theses on the History of the Cinemateca Brasileira." *Journal of Film Preservation* 82 (2010): 5. Print.
- Craig, Barbara L. "Canadian Archivists: What Types of People Are They?" *Archivaria - the Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists* 50 (2000): 79-92. Print.
- Craig, David. "Consultants Are Costing Us Billions - and for What?" *The Times* 8 April 2006. Print.
- Craik, Jennifer. *Re-Visioning Arts and Cultural Policy*. Ed. John Wanna, 2007. Print.
- Cranfield, Mark. *Mark Cranfield Interviewed by Edgar Waters*. Rec 22 November 2002.
- Craster, H H E. *History of the Bodleian Library* London: Oxford University Press, 1952. Print.
- Crikey. "The Great Name Change List." *Crikey* (2004). 30 November 2004.
- Cumming, Fia. "Cartographers Condemn National Library." *The Bulletin*. Print.
- . "Film Rescued but Archive in Trouble." *The Bulletin*: 66-67. Print.
- . "Hawke Swoops to Rescue of Archive." *The Bulletin*. Print.
- Czerniawska, Fiona, and Peter Smith. *Buying Professional Services*. London: Profile Books, 2010. Print.
- Dalton, Kim. "The Future of Screensound Is Not under Threat at All." *Canberra Times* 17 December 2003, sec. Op ed. Print.
- Danzig, Aaron. "Ted - Ted on Arrival." *Brandchannel* (2003). 22 December 2008.
- Davies, Matthew, et al. *Culture Is Not a Department: The Role of Governance in National Cultural Institutions*. Canberra: Questacon, [2009]. Print.

- Day, Timothy. "The National Sound Archive: The First Fifty Years." *Aural History*. Ed. Andy Linehan. London: British Library, 2001. Print.
- Dayaram, Kandy. "Navigating Complexity: The Dynamics of Organisational Culture During a Merger." *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management* 13 1 (2005): 71-84. Print.
- Deocampo, Nick. *Lost Films of Asia*. Manila: Anvil, 2006. Print.
- Department of Finance. *What Price Heritage? The Museums Review and the Measure of Museum Performance*, 1989. Print.
- Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, . *What Value Heritage? A Perspective on the Museums Review and the Performance of Museums*. 1990. Print.
- Dick, Bob. "Structured Focus Groups." Southern Cross University, 1998. Print.
- DiMattia, Susan, and Lynn Blumenstein. "Uncertainty Breeds Determination." *Library Journal* 128 13 (2003): 1. Print.
- Dimitriu, Christian. "Eileen Bowser - a Life between Film History, Moma and FIAF." *Journal of Film Preservation* 81 (2009): 25-46. Print.
- Dolak, Dave. "Building a Strong Brand: Brands and Branding Basics." (2001). <www.davedolak.com>.
- Donaldson, Thomas, and Lee E Preston. "The Stakeholder Theory of the Corporation: Concepts, Evidence and Implications." *Academy of Management Review* 20 1 (1995): 26. Print.
- Doucet, Michelle. "Library and Archives Canada: A Case Study of a National Library, Archives and Museum Merger." *RBM: a journal of rare books, manuscripts and cultural heritage* 8 1 (2007): 61-66. Print.
- Downs, Anthony. *Inside Bureaucracy*. Boston: Little, 1967. Print.
- Duncan, Julie, and Tom Campbell. "[Interview with Julie Duncan]." North Adelaide, 1999. Print.
- Duncan, Richard. "The Dynamics of Rebranding Part One." (c 2002). <www.mediatoolbox.co.za>.
- Ebury, Sue. *Many Lives of Kenneth Myer*. Melbourne: Milgunyah Press, 2008. Print.
- Edmondson, Ray. "AFC 'S Directions Paper Biased and Superficial." Opinion. *Canberra Times* 18 December 2003. Print.
- . *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*. Paris: UNESCO, 2004. Print.
- . "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Governance, Guardianship and the Screensound Saga." *Archives and Manuscripts* 30 1 (2002): 30-46. Print.
- . "A Memory of Jerzy Toeplitz." *Journal of Film Preservation* 88 (2010): 74-75. Print.
- . *A Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving*. Paris: UNESCO, 1998. Print.
- . *A Study Tour of Film Archives in England, Europe and the U.S.A. : Australian Film and Television School*, 1974. Print.
- . "Is Film Archiving a Profession?" *Film History: an international journal*. 7/3 (1995). Print.
- . "When Governments Make Mistakes: Advocacy and the Long Distance Archivist " *The Moving Image* 8 1 (2008): 11. Print.
- Edmondson, Ray, and Andrew Pike. *Australia's Lost Films*. National Library of Australia, 1982. Print.
- Enticknap, Leo *Moving Image Technology : From Zoetrope to Digital*. London: Wallflower, 2005. Print.
- Eyles, Allen, and David Meeker. *Missing Believed Lost : The Great British Film Search*. London: BFI Publishing, 1992. Print.
- Ferguson, Stuart, et al. "Case Studies and Codes of Ethics: The Relevance of the ACS Experience to ALIA." *Australian Library Journal* 54 3 (2005). Print.
- FIAF. *50 Years of Film Archives*. Brussels: International Federation of Film Archives, 1998. Print.
- . "Code of Ethics." 1998. Print.
- . "FIAF Yearbook 1964." Paris: 1964. Print.
- . *Film Preservation*. London, 1965. Print.
- . "Statement on FIAF Membership." 1969. Print.

- . "Statement on the Role of Film Archives." 1981. Print.
- Fletcher, Brian H. *Magnificent Obsession: The Story of the Mitchell Library, Sydney*. Allen and Unwin, 2007. Print.
- Foley, Karen. *Report on Film Archive Study Tour*. October 1976. Print.
- Fontaine, Charles, Antoine Haarman, and Stefan Schmid. "The Stakeholder Theory." (2006). 27 Jul 2011 <www.edalys.fr/documents/>.
- Fossati, Giovanni. *From Grain to Pixel : The Archival Life of Film in Transition*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009. Print.
- Francis, David. "From Parchment to Pictures to Pixels - Balancing the Accounts: Ernest Lindgren and the National Film Archive, 70 Years On " *Journal of Film Preservation* 71 (2006): 21. Print.
- Frappat, Marie. *Cinematheques a L'italienne: Conservation Et Diffusion Du Patrimoine Cinematographique En Italie*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006. Print.
- Freeman, R Edward, and David L Reed. "Stockholders and Stakeholders: A New Perspective on Corporate Governance." *California Management Review* 25 3 (1983). Print.
- French, Lisa, and Mark Poole. *Shining a Light: 50 Years of the Australian Film Institute*. The Moving Image. Ed. Tapp, Peter. 1 vols. Melbourne: Australian Teachers of Media, 2009. Print.
- Frick, Caroline. "Restoration Nation: Motion Picture Archives and 'American' Film Heritage." University of Texas, 2005. Print.
- Friedman, Andrew L, and Samantha Miles. "Developing Stakeholder Theory." *Journal of Management Studies* 39 1 (2002): 21. Print.
- Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive/ Australian Society of Archivists. "The future of the Archive". Conference communique. 3-4 July 2004. Print.
- Galvin, Peter. "Screensound Finds a Few Friends." *IF magazine* July 2000: 1. Print.
- Godwin, Annwyn. "The Merit Protection Commissioner and Ethical Decision Making." Canberra: Australian Public Service Commission, 2009. Print.
- Golder, Hilary. *Documenting a Nation- Australian Archives, the First Fifty Years*. Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994. Print.
- Gordon, Jack. "How to Select a Market Research Company." (2005). 26 July 2005 <www.brandchannel.com/papers_review.asp?sp_id=626>.
- Gordon, Josh. "Westpac Dusts Off Old Melbourne Bank Brand." *The Age* 11 March 2011. Print.
- Gracy, Karen F. *Film Preservation : Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice*. Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2007. Print.
- Gray, Robert. "Choose Your Name with Care." (c 2002). <www.demonatthus.net>.
- Grimm, Charles 'Buckey'. "A Paper Print Pre-History." *Film History: an international journal* 11 (1999): 204-16. Print.
- Gruen, Thomas W, John O Summers, and Frank Acito. "Relationship Marketing Activities, Commitment, and Membership Behaviours in Professional Associations." *Journal of Marketing* 64 (2000): 34-49. Print.
- Haig, Matt. *Brand Failures : The Truth About the 100 Biggest Branding Mistakes of All Time*. London ; Sterling, VA.: Kogan Page, 2003. Print.
- Hale, Herbert M. *The First Hundred Years of the South Australian Museum, 1856-1956*. Records of the South Australian Museum. Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 1956. Print.
- Hall, Christopher, Kiersten Schou, and Nicholas Clark. *Final Report to the Council of the National Library of Australia on Development Options for the National Film Archive*. Woden, ACT: Nicholas Clark and Associates, 1983. Print.
- Halligan, John. *The Centrelink Experiment*. 2008. Print.
- Hamer, Sandra den. "Eye Film Institute." 2010. Print.
- Hamilton, P I P. "A Design for an Australian National Film Library to be Situated in Canberra." 1950. Print.
- Hari, Johann. "The Management Consultancy Scam." *The Independent* 20 August 2010. Print.

- Harrison, Dan. "We're Not Dragons in Pearls, Say Librarians, We're Just Misunderstood " News item. *Sydney Morning Herald* 24 May 2011. Print.
- Healy, Ian. *Review of Publicity/Public Relations Activity in the National Library*, 1984. Print.
- Heller, Robert. *The Naked Manager*. London,: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972. Print.
- Henderson, Pamela W, and Joseph A Cote. "Guidelines for Selecting or Modifying Logos." *Journal of Marketing* 62 (1998): 14-30. Print.
- Hochman, Karen. "Building the Perfect Beast: The Igor Naming Guide." San Francisco: Igor, 2005. 74. Print.
- Holmes, Robyn. "Musical Dialogues." *Remarkable Occurrences*. Ed. Cochrane, Peter. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001. Print.
- Holt, Douglas B. *How Brands Become Icons : The Principles of Cultural Branding*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 2004. Print.
- Houston, Penelope. *Keepers of the Frame: the Film Archives*. London: British Film Institute, 1994. Print.
- Hughes, Kathryn. "Bleaching out a Brand: As Aviva, Norwich Union Will Sound More Like an Unreliable Rail Network Than a Trusted Insurer." *The Guardian* 22 January 2009. Print.
- Hull, Crispin. "Why Don't Bureaucrats Like Kim Dalton Say What They Mean?" *Canberra Times* 20 December 2003. Print.
- Idema, Rick, and Jeffrey Braithwaite. "Conducting a Focus Group." University of NSW, Centre for Clinical Governance Research in Health 2004. Print.
- Interbrand. *Best Global Brands 2010*. 2011. Print.
- Interim Council of the Museum of Australia. *The Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia*. Canberra, 1983. Print.
- Irvine, Kate. "Cooperation and Influence: History and Priorities of the Council of Australian State Libraries." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 34 4 (2003). Print.
- Jacobs, Rick. "Top Tips for Selecting a Brand Name." *Brandchannel*. 20 September 2005.
- Jahnichen, Gisa. "Turning Audiovisual Archives into Scientific Assets." *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice* 12 3 (2011): 8. Print.
- Janis, Irving L. *Groupthink : Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982. Print.
- Jay, Anthony, Gerald Scarfe, and Shaun Williams. *How to Beat Sir Humphrey: Every Citizen's Guide to Fighting Officialdom* Long Barn Books, 1997. Print.
- Jeavons, Clyde. "Some Observations of the National Film Archive of Australia." *Cinema Papers* (1982): 341-43, 89. Print.
- Jeffrey, Brian. "[the Beginnings of a National Film Archive]." *Walkabout* July 1973: 40-41. Print.
- Jenkin, Coralie E J. *Jean Primrose Whyte: A Professional Biography*. Clayton: Monash University Information Technology, 2010. Print.
- Kaufman, Tina. "A Struggling Film Culture, a Struggling Film Archive." *Filmnews* 6 8 (1982). Print.
- Kellerman, Bernard. "Soundsound: The Final Countdown " *IF magazine* March 2004: 58-59. Print.
- Kenney, Brian. "As Conference Approaches, SLA Seeks Leadership, Stability." *Library Journal* 127 9 (2002): 2. Print.
- Kenny, Janice. *National Library of Australia: History and Collections* Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1984. Print.
- Kent, Jacqueline. *Out of the Bakelite Box*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1983. Print.
- Kihn, Martin. *House of Lies: How Management Consultants Steal Your Watch and Then Tell You the Time*. Grand Central, 2005. Print.
- Kim, SeJeong. "Understanding of Museum Branding and Its Consequences on Museum Finance." University of Akron, 2008. Print.
- Klaue, Wolfgang. "Lest We Forget..." *Journal of Film Preservation* 81 (2009): 2-4. Print.
- Klein, Naomi. *No Logo : Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. New York: Picador, 2000. Print.

- Koch, Grace. "The Influence of Australians Internationally in the Field of Sound Archiving." *Australasian Sound Archive* 17 (1994): 44-52. Print.
- Koch, Grace, and Albrecht Haefner. "Forty Years of IASA - a Brief Introduction." *IASA Conference*. Print.
- Kotter, John. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail." *Harvard Business Review* March-April 1995 (1995). Print.
- Kozak, Zenobia Rae. "Promoting the Past, Preserving the Future: British University Heritage Collections and Identity Marketing." University of St Andrews, 2007. Print.
- KPMG. "Screensound Australia - Review of Keystone Corporate Positioning Consultancy." Ed. Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. Canberra, 2000. Print.
- Kula, Sam. *Appraising Moving Images*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2003. Print.
- . "Film Archives at the Centenary of Film." *Archivaria - the Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists* 40 (1995): 16. Print.
- Kuraoka, John. "Brands and Branding: A White Paper." (c 2002). <www.kuraoka.com>.
- L.Krotz, Joann. "Dos and Dont's for Using Marketing Focus Groups". 2011. Microsoft Business. <www.microsoft.com/business/en-us/resources/ArticleReader>.
- Lake, Larry. *Conversation with Larry Lake - Interviewer Hazel De Berg*. Hazel de Berg collection Rec 4 November 1967.
- LaPalombara, Joseph. "Power and Politics in Organisations: Public and Private Sector Comparisons." *Handbook of Organisational Learning and Knowledge*. Ed. Dierkes, Meinolf: Oxford University Press, 2001. 557-81. Print.
- Law, Stella Wai-Art. "A Branding Context: The Guggenheim and the Louvre." Ohio State University, 2008. Print.
- Lehman, Kim. "Investigating the Role of Marketing in Museum Management: Australia's State Museums." Print.
- Lewis, David. *The Man Who Invented Hitler*. London: Headline, 2003. Print.
- Liddle, Rod. "Water, Prozac, Management Consultants: All Completely Useless." *The Spectator* (2008): 1. Print.
- Lister, David. "Vandalism at the National Film Theatre." *The Independent* 3 February 2007. Print.
- Liu, S W, and Esther Tang. "Factors Influencing Effective Rebranding Strategy." *Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy*. Ed. Print.
- Long, Chris. *Report on the Sound Section of the National Library of Australia*. March 1982. Print.
- Long, Joan and Martin Long. *The Pictures That Moved: A Picture History of the Australian Cinema 1896-1929*. Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1982. Print.
- Lynskey, Mike. *Report on European and North American Film Archives*. July 1982. Print.
- Madden, Caroline. "Avoiding Meltdown in the Chocolate Business " *Irish Times* 12 February 2010. Print.
- Maddox, Gary. "Anger and Angst as Film Archive Moves to Fox." *Sydney Morning Herald* 12 Nov 1999. Print.
- Maidment, Barry Howarth and Ewan, ed. *Light from the Tunnel*. 1 vols. Canberra: Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, 2004. Print.
- Mannoni, Laurent. *Histoire De La Cinematheque Francaise*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2006. Print.
- Martin, Brian. "Bucking the System: Andrew Wilkie and the Difficult Task of the Whistleblower." *Overland* 180 (2005): 45-48. Print.
- Mather, Patricia, and N H Agnew. *A Time for a Museum: A History of the Queensland Museum 1862-1986*. Memoirs of the Queensland Museum. Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1986. Print.
- Matuszewski, Boleslaw. *A New Source of History/ Animated Photography: What It Is, What It Should Be*. 1898. Warsaw: Filmoteka Narodowa, 1999. Print.
- Maynard, Micheline. "Delta to Discontinue Its Low-Fare Song Airline." *New York Times* 28 October 2005. Print.

- McCann, Graham. *Dad's Army : The Story of a Classic Television Show*. London: Fourth Estate, 2001. Print.
- McCarthy, James. "No Easy Answers: The Problems Facing the Union of Audio and Visual Archiving." *Australasian Sound Archive* 32 (2006): 51-58. Print.
- McKernan, Michael. *Here Is Their Spirit: A History of the Australian War Memorial 1917-1990*. University of Queensland Press, 1991. Print.
- McLellan, Andrew. *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. Print.
- McMullin, B J, ed. *Collections, Characters and Communities: The Shaping of Libraries in Australia and New Zealand*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010. Print.
- McVilly, David. "A History of the State Library of Victoria, 1853-1974." Monash University, 1975. Print.
- Mearns, David C. *The Story up to Now, the Library of Congress, 1800-1946*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947. Print.
- Merrilees, Bill, and Dale Miller. "Principles of Corporate Rebranding." *European Journal of Marketing* 42 5/6 (2008): 537-52. Print.
- Miller, Beverley. "Film Head Critical of Library's Archive Role." *Canberra Times* 20 Sep 1983. Print.
- . "Library to Consider Disciplining Archivist." *Canberra Times* 7 Oct 1983. Print.
- . "Producer Quits Library's Film Advisory Committee." *Canberra Times* 8 Oct 1983. Print.
- Mulvaney, John. "Cultural Institutions Suffer Deskilling." *Canberra Times* 24 December 2002. Print.
- Musa, Helen. "Relief but Apprehension at National Film and Sound Archive over Dalton's Move." *Canberra Times* 14 Jan 2006. Print.
- Muzellec, Laurent, Manus Doogan, and Mary Lambkin. "Corporate Rebranding - an Exploratory Review." *Irish Marketing Review* 16 2 (2003): 31-40. Print.
- Muzellec, Laurent, and Mary Lambkin. "Corporate Rebranding: Destroying, Transferring or Creating Brand Equity?" *European Journal of Marketing* 40 7/8 (2006): 803-24. Print.
- National Film and Sound Archive Advisory Committee. *Time in Our Hands*. Canberra: National Film and Sound Archive, 1985. Print.
- National Library of Australia. *Annual Report 1983-84*. Print.
- Nemec, Belinda Jane. "The Grainger Museum in Its Museological and Historical Contexts." University of Melbourne, 2006. Print.
- Neumeier, Marty, and American Institute of Graphic Arts. *The Brand Gap : How to Bridge the Distance between Business Strategy and Design : A Whiteboard Overview*. 1st ed. Indianapolis, Ind.: New Riders Pub., 2003. Print.
- Newman, Joanna M A. "Underpinning Democracy: The Future of Archives New Zealand." Wellington: Archives & Records Association of New Zealand, 2010. Print.
- Nissim, Bill. "The ABCs of Great Brands." *Brandchannel*: 5 pp. 5 October 2005.
- Noordegraaf, Julia. *Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Visual Culture*. Erasmus University, 2004. Print.
- O'Hara, John. "The Case for Detaching the Film Library from the National Library." Commonwealth National Library, c 1953. Print.
- Olson, Chris. "Introducing the Branding Initiative." *Information Outlook* 7 (2003). Print.
- Orts, Eric W, and Alan Strudler. "Putting a Stake in Stakeholder Theory." *Journal of Business Ethics* 88 (2009): 605-15. Print.
- Osborn, Andrew D, and Margaret Osborn. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Library 1901-27 and the Origins of the National Library of Australia*. Department of the Parliamentary Library, National Library of Australia, 1989. Print.
- Palmer-Woodward, Catherine. "Identity Formation and Emerging Intentions in Consultant-Client Relationships." University of Hertfordshire, 2007. Print.

- Parker, Johanna. *Memory of a Nation: National Archives of Australia*. Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2007. Print.
- Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. *National Library and Roosevelt Memorial, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Minutes of Evidence*. Canberra, 1949. Print.
- . *Report Relating to the Proposed Erection of the National Library and Roosevelt Memorial, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory*. Canberra, 1949. Print.
- Paton, G H. *Report of the National Library Enquiry Committee 1956-57*, 1957. Print.
- Pederson, Ann E. "Understanding Ourseleves and Others: Australian Archivists and Temperament." *Archival Science* 3 (2003): 52. Print.
- Peirano-Vejo, Maria Elisa. "Knowledge Creation: A Study of Consulting Practice in Corporate Governance ". Massey University, 2004. Print.
- Peirano-Vejo, Maria Elisa, and Ralph E Stablein. "Do Consultants in Corporate Governance Share a Community? An Empirical Study on Their Practice " *Journal of Management and Organisation* 16.2 (2010): 299-313 pp.
- Perkins, Anne G. "Corporate Identity: What's in a Name? ." *Harvard Business Review* 73 2 (1995): 1. Print.
- Pfarrer, Michael D, et al. "After the Fall: Reintegrating the Corrupt Organisation." *Academy of Management Review* 33 3 (2008): 20. Print.
- Phillips, Peter J. *Kill or Cure: Lotions, Potions, Characters and Quacks of Early Australia*. Greenhouse, 1978. Print.
- Piggott, Michael. "Library Control of Archives." *Third Forum on Australian Library History* Ed. W Boyd Rayward. Sydney: University of New South Wales School of Librarianship. Print.
- . "The Visit of Dr T R Schellenberg to Australia." University of New South Wales, 1989. Print.
- Piggott, Michael, and Sue McKemmish, eds. *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives' First Fifty Years*. 1994. Print.
- Pigott, P H. *Museums in Australia 1975*. Canberra, 1975. Print.
- Pike, Andrew. "The Film and Sound Archive: What's Happening at Screensound Australia?". Canberra, 2003. Print.
- Pike, Andrew, and Ross Cooper. *Australian Film, 1900-1977 : A Guide to Feature Film Production*. Rev. ed. ed. Melbourne ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.
- Plewa, Carolin, Vinh Lu, and Roberta Veale. "The Impact of Rebranding on Club Member Relationships." *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 23 2 (2011): 222-42. Print.
- Procter, Margaret, Michael Cook, and Caroline Williams. *Political Pressure and the Archival Record*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. Print.
- Puplick, Christopher. *Being Heard: Achieving an Effective Arts Advocacy*. Platform Papers: Currency House, 2008. Print.
- Puplick, Christopher, Andrew Pike, and Ray Edmondson. *NFSA History*. Rec 2 October 2008, Canberra.
- Rasmussen, Carol. *A Museum for the People: A History of Museum Victoria and Its Predecessors 1854-2000*. Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2001. Print.
- Reade, Eric. *Australia's Silent Films*. Lansdowne Press, 1970. Print.
- Ren, Ke. "Re-Examining the Hostile Takeover." University of British Columbia, 1998. Print.
- Reynolds, Sue. "The Establishment of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria, 1851-1884: Antecedents, Foundation and Legacy ". Charles Sturt University, 2008. Print.
- Ries, Al, and Laura Ries. *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding* 1st ed. New York: HarperBusiness, 2002. Print.
- Ries, Al, and Jack Trout. *Positioning : The Battle for Your Mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000. Print.
- Rodriguez, Perla Olivia. "Model Development of the National Sound Archive of Mexico." Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2011. Print.
- Romaine, Cindy. "Branding Our Association: a New Name - a New Vision." *Information Outlook* 7 4 (2003): 12-14, 16-20. Print.

- Rosario, Vilma Del, and Kar Han Goh. "Community Stakeholder Management in Wind Energy Development Projects: a Planning Approach." 2007. Print.
- Roud, Richard. *A Passion for Films: Henri Langlois and the Cinematheque Francaise*. Reprint ed: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. Print.
- Rowley, Jennifer. "Managing Branding and Corporate Image for Library and Information Services." *Library Review* 46 4 (1997): 244-50. Print.
- Roythorne, Peter. "Playing the Name Game." *Mediaweek* (2005): 5 pp. 9 July 2005.
- Rusch, Robin. "Do Non-Profits Have Value?" *Brandchannel* (2002): 3 pp. 1 March 2005.
- Santamarina, Antonio, ed. *Filmoteca Espanola: Cincuenta Anos De Historia (1953-2003)*. Madrid: filmoteca Espanola/ I.C.C.A./Ministerio de Cultura, 2005. Print.
- Sargent, Ralph N. *Preserving the Moving Image*. Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Endowment for the Arts, 1974. Print.
- Sauer, Abram D. "Consignia - Royal F*%# Up." (2002). <www.brandchannel.com>.
- Scherdin, Mary Jane, and Anne K Beaubien. "Shattering Our Stereotype: Librarians' New Image " *Library Journal* (1995): 35-38. Print.
- Schumpeter. "Logoland: Why Consumers Balk at Companies' Efforts to Rebrand Themselves " *The Economist* 13 January 2011. Print.
- Senior, Ian. *Consigned to Oblivion: What Future for Consignia?* London: Adam Smith Institute, 2002. Print.
- Serrat, Olivier. "New Age Branding and the Public Sector." *Knowledge Solutions* 71 (2010): 6. Print.
- Sharman, Robert C. "Archives and Research". *Design for Diversity: Library Services for Higher Education and Research in Australia*. Eds. Harrison Bryan and Gordon Greenwood. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1977. 204-40. Print.
- . "Our National Heritage: the Australian Librarian's Commitment to its Preservation." c 1989. Pamphlet. Print.
- Shaw, Robert B. *History of the Comstock Patent Medicine Business and Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills*. Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology, No. 22. Washington,: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972. Print.
- Shirley, Graham. "Activism Towards a National Film Archive." *Cinema Papers* (1984): 161-63. Print.
- Shirley, Graham, and Brian Adams. *Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years*. Angus and Robertson, in association with Currency Press, 1983. Print.
- Silverstein, Barry. "Brand Darwinism: When & Why Brands Falter & Die." *Brandchannel* (2008). 22 December 2008.
- Simons, Margaret. "Film Archives Report Rejected by Industry." *The Age* 14 Sep 1983. Print.
- Slack, Scott. "Successful Firm Re-Branding Requires Careful Analysis." *Business first* 22 July 2002 (2002). Print.
- Slide, Anthony. *Nitrate Won't Wait: A History of Film Preservation in the United States*. McFarland Classics: Jefferson (EUA): , 2000. Print.
- Smith, Shaun. "Ten Ways to Screw up Your Brand." (2004). <www.brandchannel.com>.
- Smither, Roger, and Catherine A. Surowiec. *This Film is Dangerous : a Celebration of Nitrate Film*. Bruxelles: FIAF, 2002. Print.
- Snoek-Brown, Jennifer. "Connecting Librarians and Film - Resource List." Platteville: University of Wisconsin, 2006. Print.
- Souza, Carlos Roberto Rodrigues de. "The Cinemateca Brasileira and the Preservation of Films in Brazil." University of Sao Paulo, 2009. Print.
- Special Libraries Association. "Special Libraries Association Name to Remain: Members Affirm Commitment to Proud Tradition." 2003. Print.
- Spiers, Thomas. "Merging and Demerging in Organisations: Transforming Identities." University of Hertfordshire, 2007. Print.

- Stanford, Naomi. "Organisation Culture: Getting It Right." Economist Books: Profile books, 2010. Print.
- Strahan, Ronald, and David F Brannigan. *Rare and Curious Specimens: An Illustrated History of the Australian Museum, 1827-1979*. Sydney: Australian Museum, 1979. Print.
- Streader, Trevor, and Denise Whitehouse. "Not Another Logo! Designing Corporate Identity Systems that Drive Change within Institutional Culture: A Case Study in Participatory Design." *International Design Management Institute - Education conference*. Ed. Print.
- Stuart, Helen, and Laurent Muzellec. "Corporate Makeovers: Can a Hyena be Rebranded?" *Brand Management* 11 6 (2004): 472-82. Print.
- Sturdy, Andrew, et al. *Management Consultancy*. Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- Tan, Patricia. "Down to the Core: Branding Not-for-Profits." (2003). <www.brandchannel.com>.
- Thomas, Robert J. "Irreconcilable Differences." *Outlook* 2000 1 (2000): 29-35. Print.
- Thompson, John. "At the National Portrait Gallery: Art or History?" *reCollections* 5 1 (2010): 12. Print.
- . *The Peoples' Treasures: Collections in the National Library of Australia*. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1993. Print.
- Thornley, Clare, et al. "Do RFIDS (Radio Frequency Identifier Devices) Provide New Ethical Dilemmas for Librarians and Information Professionals? ." *International Journal of Information Management* (2011): 10. Print.
- Tonnesen, Hans Christian. "Do Consultants Ever Speak the Truth?" Essay. University of Oxford, 2004. Print.
- Townsend, Robert. *Further up the Organization*. 1st ed. New York: Knopf, 1984. Print.
- Turner, E. S. *The Shocking History of Advertising. (Revised Edition.)*. pp. 299. Penguin Books in association with Michael Joseph: Harmondsworth, 1965. Print.
- Turnour, Quentin. "A.K.A. 'Home of the Blizzard': Fact and Artefact in the Film on the Australian Antarctic Expedition, 1922-1914 " *NFSA Journal* 2 4 (2007). Print.
- Twitchell, James B. *Branded Nation : The Marketing of Megachurch, College, Inc., and Museumworld*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Print.
- Uhrig, John. *Review of the Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders*, 2003. Print.
- UNESCO. *Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images*. 1980. Print.
- Upton, Murray S. *A Rich and Diverse Fauna*. CSIRO Publishing, 1997. Print.
- Urban, Andrew L. *Edge of the Known World: The Australian Film, Television and Radio School*. Australian Film, Television and Radio School, 1998. Print.
- Verdin, Mike. "Consignia: Nine Letters That Spell Fiasco." *BBC news* (2002).
- Virani, Varsha. "Mergers and Acquisitions - a Case of System Failure." *IndianMBA.com* (2007). 7 January 2011.
- Wallace, Roderick John. "The Film Division - Past, Present and Future." National Library of Australia, 1970. 21. Print.
- . *Rod Wallace Interviewed by Peter Biskup*. 1984.
- Walsh, Peter. *Confessions of a Failed Finance Minister*. Sydney: Random House, 1996. Print.
- Walters, J Hart. *Image and Status of the Library and Information Services Field*. Philadelphia: School of Business Administration, Temple University, 1970. Print.
- Walvis, Tjaco H. "Three Laws of Branding: Neuroscientific Foundations of Effective Brand Building " *Journal of Brand Management* 16 3 (2007): 19. Print.
- Wasson, Haidee. "Modern Ideas About Old Films: The Musuem of Modern Art's Film Library and Film Culture, 1935-39 ". McGill University, 1998. Print.
- Waterford, Jack. "A General at War with Himself." Opinion. *Canberra Times* 29 January 2011 sec. Forum. Print.
- Watson, Don. *Bendable Learnings: The Wisdom of Modern Management*. Sydney: Random House, 2009. Print.

- Watts, Richard. "Archive Separation - Only the First Step." *Australian Film Institute Projections* June/July/August 1984 Issue 30 ed. Print.
- Webber, Pauline. "History of the Sydney Film Festival 1954-1983." University of Technology, 2005. Print.
- Werr, Andreas. "The Language of Change: The Roles of Methods in the Work of Management Consultants." Stockholm School of Economics, 1999. Print.
- White, Harold L. "Documentary Films and Other New Materials in Library Service." Ed. Print.
- Whole Pop Magazine Online. "'Darkie Toothpaste' Blackens Colgate's Reputation ". 23 April 2006. <www.wholepop.com/features/oral/strange>.
- Whyte, Jean Primrose. "Reflections on Some Problems." 1975. Print.
- Whyte, Jean Primrose, and Neil A Radford, eds. *An Enthusiasm for Libraries: Essays in Honour of Harrison Bryan/ with a Rejoinder by Harrison Bryan*. Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1988. Print.
- Wilenski, Peter. "Competing Values in Public Administration." *Private Values and Public Policy*. Ed. Banks, Robert. Canberra: Zadok Centre, 1983. 15-28. Print.
- Williamson, Jeanine. "Jungian/Myers-Briggs Personality Types of Librarians in Films." *The Reference Librarian* 37 78 (2003): 47-59. Print.
- Williamson, Kirsty. "Research Techniques: Questionnaires and Interviews " *Research Methods for Students and Professionals* Ed. Williamson, Kirsty. Wagga Wagga: Charles Sturt University, 2000. 223-29. Print.
- Wilson, David M. *The British Museum : A History*. London, 2002. Print.
- Works, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public. *Report*. Print.
- York, Barry. "'Impossible on Less Terms': The Oral History Collection." *Remarkable Occurrences* Ed. Peter Cochrane. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001. Print.
- Young, James Harvey. *The Toadstool Millionaires; a Social History of Patent Medicines in America before Federal Regulation*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961. Print.