



## ***NEWSLETTER NO. 42 JUNE 2018***

***Welcome to our Winter newsletter. There's plenty of action at the NFSA these days and the Friends are part of it. Included in this Newsletter you will find details on the future directions of the NFSA, as outlined by new CEO Jan Müller at a special Friends presentation; details of our current Friday afternoon CMAG program, and some exciting new developments at the NFSA. Plus what the Friends have been up to in other areas – all to support the work and future of this great national institution.***

### **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

The Parliamentary Inquiry on Canberra's National Institutions is currently underway. Among other things the Inquiry is considering what the institutions are doing to maintain viability and relevance to sustainably grow their profile, visitor numbers, and revenue, including experimenting with new forms of public engagement and audience participation - and any other matters the Committee wants to raise.

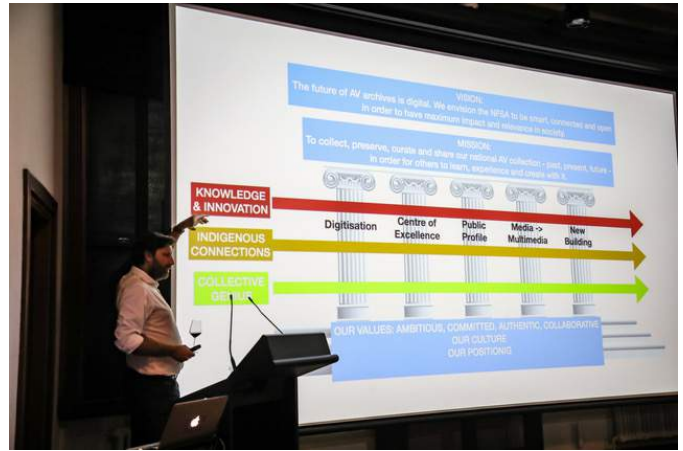
The reality is that, over the last decade, the NFSA's budget and staff numbers have both declined by around 20%, eaten away by so-called "efficiency dividends" and inflation. At the same time, demands on its services have been increasing relentlessly. This decline needs to be reversed. The Parliamentary Committee has accepted a submission from the Friends which addresses all of its terms of reference. We have done so with some frankness, and have proposed what we believe will be constructive directions for action. I commend it to all our members.

The Friends' submission can be found on the Friends website [www.archivefriends.org.au](http://www.archivefriends.org.au) as well as on the Parliamentary Committee website [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Capital\\_and\\_External\\_Territories/NationalInstitutions/Terms\\_of\\_Reference](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Capital_and_External_Territories/NationalInstitutions/Terms_of_Reference) - where you can also read all the submissions relating to the NFSA and other Canberra institutions. The Friends' Committee would welcome your comments and feedback.

Ray Edmondson  
President

# ***New Directions for the NFSA:***

Our new CEO, Jan Müller, has an exciting new vision for the NFSA. In a special presentation to the Friends, Jan outlined his ideas for the institution.



It is a vision for the future:  
new directions,  
new buildings,  
new responsibilities to the  
public



## ***Friday with Friends at CMAG Our Winter Program.***

***We're continuing our very successful program of events for  
Friends in the convenient and central Canberra Museum  
and Gallery in Civic Square***

### ***15 June 2.30 -3.30: NED KELLY ON FILM***

Besides being the subject of the world's first feature film (*The Story of the Kelly Gang, 1906*), Ned Kelly has been the focus of more feature films than probably any other Australian historical figure. Director Harry Southwell dramatised the Kelly legend on film no fewer than four times (1920, 1923, 1934, 1947)! This presentation will feature the surviving fragments of Southwell's second foray, *When the Kellys Were Out*, released in Britain in 1923 as *The True Story of the Kelly Gang*. Shot in the now vanished Burratorang Valley, west of Sydney, it is rarely seen today. Like most other bushranging films during the silent and early sound eras, it attracted the ire of the censor and was banned for a time.

After the screening join CMAG Director Shane Breynard for an introduction to Sir Sidney Nolan's iconic Ned Kelly paintings displayed in CMAG's collection.



### ***20 July 2.30 -3.30: SHOWGIRL'S LUCK (aka TALKIE MAD)***

Australia's very first screen musical (1931) is a landmark film. It starts with an apology and defies categorisation, but it is an archaeological treasure from the beginning of the sound era. It features weird special effects, amazing performances (we hear "Sentimental Bloke" Arthur Tauchert's voice in his only speaking role) and time warp documentary footage woven into the story, including the Zig Zag Railway and the Harbour Bridge under construction. Shot in Sydney and the Blue Mountains, it is a short feature - 50 minutes - and for decades was a lost film. It was directed by Norman Dawn, who had previously made the epic *For the Term of His Natural Life* in 1927.



**17 August 2.30 – 3.30:**

**UNKNOWN FRANK HURLEY**

Adventurous cinematographer Frank Hurley is best remembered for his extraordinary work in Antarctica and Papua New Guinea, but his career was diverse. He was an official cameraman during World War I and did other freelance work. At Sydney's Cinesound Studio in the 1930s he turned his talents to feature films and travelogues. This will be a presentation of three of his quirky short documentaries *Jewel of the Pacific (Lord Howe Island)*, *The Australian Flight 1919* and *Treasures of Katoomba: a ramble midst crags and dales*. Hurley had an inimitable style, especially when he insisted on doing his own narrations.



**There is plenty of parking adjacent to the Canberra Museum and Gallery in Civic Square, or in the Canberra Centre. The bus interchange is close, too.**

**Join us for coffee beforehand at the CMAG Café.**

**NFSA Friends and CMAG members free, or by gold coin donation.**

**Friends of the NFSA Donate \$1000 to  
NFSA Restore**

*NFSA Restores is an exciting program to digitise, restore and preserve, at the highest archival standards, classic and cult Australian films so they can be seen on the big screen in today's digital cinemas.*

The collection belongs to all Australians but it is fragile. Films, tapes, recordings, photographs and costumes can all deteriorate over time and need constant care.

**The NFSA is always working to preserve Australia's audio-visual collection and make it available to as many people as possible. The Committee decided it would be appropriate for the Friends of the NFSA to support this important venture with a \$1000 donation.**

Individuals may also wish to donate – and can do so at the

NFSA: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/about/our-mission/support-us/nfsa-restores-campaign>

## **Latest news from the NFSA:**

***At our last Committee meeting the Friends were updated on changes to the NFSA's program for public engagement under new CEO, Jan Müller.***

***These include:***

- **Revival of the exhibition program**, starting with *Heath Ledger: a life in pictures* in August
- **Increased opening hours** to coincide with the exhibition program
- **Revival of courtyard events** in the warmer months
- **Revised film screening schedule** with continued special admission prices for Friends
- **Re-opened café**
- **Reintroduction of short term parking on site** to match these changes

The NFSA advised that it is keen to work with Friends, including increasing its use of volunteers, and supporting more Friends' events at the NFSA. The NFSA also welcomes our support in promoting its activities and programs.

Finally, the NFSA reiterated that it welcomes input from Friends into its programs. It is particularly keen to hear of any relevant exhibitions that we see, or hear of, around Australia or overseas and that might be brought to the NFSA. If you see such an exhibition, please contact the Friends, and we will pass it on.

**The Committee felt it is a very positive response from the new management at the NFSA.**

**Don't forget our Winter program of events  
continues at CMAG, 2.30 this Friday 15<sup>th</sup>  
June.**

## ***Vale Barry Cohen.***

The NFSA's first Minister, the Hon Barry Cohen AM, passed away on December 18, 2017. He was Minister for the Arts in the Hawke Government, and in that capacity, on 5 April 1984, he announced in Parliament the creation of the National Film and Sound Archive.



He was honoured by a State Memorial Service in Old Parliament House on 5 February 2018, at which tributes were delivered by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten, and former Prime Minister Bob Hawke AC. I attended the service both in a personal capacity and on behalf of the Friends, and after the service was able to express condolences to Barry's family.

The NFSA was very close to Barry's heart. During the 12 months or so leading up to its creation, I was head of the National Library's Film Section. The outcome of the discussions and negotiations then proceeding would have direct consequences for me and my staff. Barry made a point of asking for my advice and, to the extent that he properly could, keeping me aware of what was happening. Following his announcement of the NFSA's creation, he promptly visited the Film Section to meet every staff member who would be affected by the NFSA's separation from the National Library.

When Barry entered Parliament in 1969, the legendary Fred Daly told him not to be funny or he wouldn't get on. But he had an irrepressible sense of humour which did serve him well, both as a Minister and in his post-Parliamentary career as a writer and political commentator. It wasn't surprising that the tributes at the Memorial Service abounded in funny anecdotes by and about Barry.

My favourite anecdote, "Cohen's Law", extracted from one of his books, is reproduced below. I still vividly remember Barry doing a double take as he got out of his car on his first visit to NFSA's headquarters.....

*Ray Edmondson*

**COHEN'S LAW** (From *The Life of the Party* by Barry Cohen, Penguin, 1987)

The National Film and Sound Archive was hived off from the National Library, largely as a result of the efforts of Bob Hogg and the intervention of the Prime Minister. History will show it as one of the most far-sighted heritage decisions made by the Hawke Government.

When Cabinet discussed the matter, I optimistically suggested that \$5-10 million should be provided for a new building. In the difficult period of economic restraint that prevailed since we inherited Malcolm and John's \$9 billion blow out legacy, I knew it was extremely remote that such a request would get any sympathy, however, there was no harm in asking. I was therefore not disappointed when the Treasurer smiled at me, as only he can, and suggested I try again in another five years. The NFSA was to be a separate institution but still located inside the National Library building.

Some weeks passed and I received a letter from Neal Blewett, the Minister for Health, informing me that the Institute of Anatomy had ceased operations and would I be kind enough to arrange to move the huge collection of Aboriginal artefacts that were part of the National Collection. It was, he informed me, the intention of his Department to turn the Institute into a local Community Health Centre.

It immediately occurred to me that the vacated building, with its contemporary upturned saucer shape and its superb theatre facility, would be an excellent site for the National Film and Sound Archive, so I immediately wrote to Neal suggesting this option. To my delight he agreed and within days plans were made to make the move. The staff at NFSA moved like lightning and within six weeks I received an invitation from Graham Gilmore the Interim Director and Ray Edmondson, the moving spirit behind the NFSA's creation, to visit to newly renovated premises.

Pat Gallagher, my Canberra driver, and I set off from Parliament House and headed off in the direction of our new building. We passed the Lakeside Hotel and just as I was expecting Pat to turn left into the Institute, he continued on.

"Hey!" I said, "Where the hell are you going? I told you to take me to the old Institute of Anatomy building, where the National Film and Sound Archive is located."

"I am," muttered Pat. "That building you are looking at is the Institute of Science." Which goes to prove Cohen's Law: "All the good things Governments do, are by accident!"

**The Friends of the NFSA held its Annual General Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2017, at which the following members were elected to the Committee for 2018:**

President: Ray Edmondson  
Vice-President: Chris Harrison  
Secretary: Sue Terry  
Treasurer: Chris Emery  
Committee Members: David Kilby, Lindy Ross, Tony Briscoe  
Public Officer: Jude Briscoe

### ***The March Magical Movie Tour – Cinematic Chapman -***

Once again a coach load of Friends set out to explore the fascinating background of the street names in Chapman. Film historian Andrew Pike and Friends' President Ray Edmondson combined their extensive knowledge of the Australian film industry with clips from the NFSA to meet some of the famous names after which Chapman streets have been named. Of course the afternoon tea stop was again one of the very enjoyable features of the trip. This was the second time we have run this popular event - and we are looking forward to a reprise of the David Kilby – led tour of the musical stars behind the streets of Moncrieff, later this year.





# **CALLING for VOLUNTEERS!** 🙌🙌🙌

*Are you interested in film culture? Do you like working with databases?*

*If so you may like to join our little band of volunteers who are indexing film journals, like Metro and Senses of Cinema, for the NFSA's contribution to an international database. Training will be provided! We work on Wednesdays, in the NFSA's gorgeous library from 2.30 to 4.30pm. You can offer weekly, fortnightly, monthly, ad hoc, as suits your schedule.*

*If this is not your thing, but you would like to help the committee in some way - perhaps with our events or publicity, for example - we are also interested to hear from you. You may wish to man the desk on NFSA Film Nights, or give introductions to the films shown on these occasions.*

*To offer your services or to find out more about any of these, please email Sue Terry at [archivefriends@gmail.com](mailto:archivefriends@gmail.com)*



*The Friends would like to acknowledge the support of the IT firm, Blue Packets, in hosting our website.*



Find the Friends on Facebook  
[www.facebook.comNFSAFriends](https://www.facebook.com/NFSAFriends)

It's worth regularly checking the Friends' website and Facebook page to keep up with what's happening.

## **The 2018 Friends of the NFSA Committee:**

President: Ray Edmondson, Vice President: Chris Harrison, Secretary: Sue Terry, Treasurer: Chris Emery, Committee: David Kilby, Lindy Ross, Tony Briscoe. Public Officer: Jude Briscoe, Newsletter Editor: Lindy Ross

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