

Public engagement

- 3.1 Public expectations, and the manner in which the public engages with Canberra’s national institutions, have evolved. This is in part due to broader shifts in social, political and cultural norms, along with major technological change. People visiting and engaging with the national institutions now want to experience and participate in their collections and offerings, rather than simply consume information.¹ As a result, some institutions have prioritised new initiatives to improve the visitor experience, placing citizens and communities at the centre of the process.² Examples of such initiatives include collaborating with audiences to create new content, better serving the physical needs of visitors, and creating dedicated galleries and ‘art play’ space for children, families and young people.
- 3.2 At the same time, many national institutions have to balance audience engagement with other pressures including resourcing, budget constraints, individual mandates to grow collections and the need to provide digitised content. Evidence to the Committee suggested that these demands have already resulted in some institutions reducing opening hours or closing exhibition spaces.³ Some expressed concern that in the current climate, too much emphasis on public outreach puts core functions at risk.⁴
- 3.3 This chapter reviews how national institutions engage with the public. It examines how the institutions market themselves, the use of digital

1 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 2.

2 Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 6.

3 For example: Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 5; and Dr Andrew Pike, *Submission 24*, p. [1].

4 For example: Honest History, *Submission 14*, p. 3.

technology, how the institutions can better engage under-represented sectors of Australian society and the use of special access programs for particular community groups. The chapter will also consider education programs conducted for school students, and how national institutions can better engage Australians outside of Canberra.

Marketing Canberra's national institutions

3.4 To some extent, many institutions have been able to rely on their national status, location in the capital and iconic architecture to attract visitors. In general, galleries, libraries, archives and museums 'occupy a unique role in society with high degrees of public trust and confidence in their collective institutional remit'.⁵ They are often in central locations and are highly recognisable. Evidence to the Committee recognised that the buildings which house some national institutions represent some of Canberra's most significant architectural landmarks.⁶ It was argued that these buildings contribute significantly to some institutions' brand recognition. For example, Ms Marianne Albury-Colless reflected that:

For visitors to Canberra the brand for our national institutions is largely represented by their very presence. Their presence is a physical experience viewed from various vantage points across Lake Burley Griffin - an impressive landscape in almost every direction.⁷

3.5 Many national institutions are instantly recognisable. Some of the institutions have even incorporated building graphics into their logos as part of their marketing strategies.⁸ The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) noted, for example, that Parliament House products and marketing feature the 'iconic flag mast' of Parliament House.⁹ However, the Department conceded that other entities across Canberra incorporate the flag mast in their branding as it has become 'the instantly recognisable symbol for the nation's capital'.¹⁰ The Department suggested that too much reliance on the iconic status of the building to draw visitors had

5 Australian Academy of the Humanities, *Submission 44*, p. 4.

6 For example: Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 1; National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 1.

7 Ms Marianne Albury-Colless, *Submission 53*, p. [2].

8 Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

9 Department of Parliamentary Services, *Submission 76*, p. 2.

10 Department of Parliamentary Services, *Submission 76*, p. 1.

resulted in displays in public areas of Parliament House having changed little since the building was opened.¹¹

- 3.6 It was also noted, however, that some smaller institutions, and those located away from Canberra's Parliamentary Zone¹² and Lake Burley Griffin, could not rely on their central location and iconic buildings to attract recognition and visitors in the same way. For example, while the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) is housed in an iconic building, it submitted that relocating to Acton Peninsula would help increase its national profile as well as connections with other national collecting institutions.¹³
- 3.7 Moreover, while national institutions generally receive high levels of public trust and confidence, the Committee was advised that it varies between the different institutions. For example, the Committee was advised that audiences familiar with the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 'view the brand as being an extremely trustworthy, credible and reliable source of information'.¹⁴ In contrast, submitters to the committee argued that ongoing funding pressures have significantly affected the brand of other institutions.¹⁵ The National Gallery of Australia (NGA) contended that the Australian Government's efficiency dividend has had a 'profoundly negative impact' on its brand perception.¹⁶ Similarly, the Committee was advised that the inability of the National Archives of Australia (NAA) to provide access to previously unexamined 'open period' documents in a timely manner¹⁷ has had an 'adverse impact on the brand of the Archives'.¹⁸
- 3.8 In keeping with a changing world, national institutions are increasingly using online marketing tools to raise awareness of their work and activities. For example, the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG)

11 Department of Parliamentary Services, *Submission 76*, p. 2.

12 The Parliamentary Zone, often referred to as the 'parliamentary triangle', is established by the *Parliament Act 1974* (Cth) and comprises the area bounded by the southern edge of Lake Burley Griffin, Kings Avenue, State Circle and Commonwealth Avenue. Parliament House and eight other national institutions are located within the Zone.

13 National Film and Sound Archive, *Submission 28*, p. 9.

14 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Digital Activation Research and Insights Report*, February 2015, as quoted in: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Submission 66*, p. 5.

15 For example: Australian Historical Association, *Submission 35*, p. [1]; and National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 2.

16 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 2.

17 Professor Frank Bongiorno, *Submission 22*, p. 1.

18 Australian Historical Association, *Submission 35*, p. [2].

told the Committee that it predominantly uses online marketing tools to promote the Gardens as a visitor destination and to advertise activities.¹⁹ The National Library of Australia (NLA) said that it 'has invested strongly in its world-leading digital platforms, ensuring that [its] local brand translates to a strong national brand and online presence'.²⁰ The NLA said that this investment had increased its brand recognition, noting that in June 2017, 83 per cent of Australians were aware of the Library, compared to only 52 per cent in 2004.²¹

- 3.9 Major exhibitions and events also play a significant role in marketing for some larger institutions. Mr David Thurrowgood suggested that the branding of national institutions was built around travelling and temporary exhibitions, and he argued that the institutions may instead benefit from branding themselves as standalone and valuable entities.²² The NGA reflected that it has traditionally focused its marketing and branding on major-income-earning 'blockbuster' exhibitions.²³ However, the NGA told the Committee that some of its recent marketing efforts have also been directed at internal, un-ticketed exhibitions. The NGA highlighted that it has collaborated with other organisations to 'assist in elevating messages and supporting campaigns to reach a broader audience'.²⁴

Visitor data

- 3.10 One indicator of the effectiveness of national institutions' marketing is the number of visitors received and visitors' satisfaction with the experience. While some of the institutions reported increased visitor numbers and high visitor experience ratings through internal surveys and travel websites such as *TripAdvisor*,²⁵ the Committee received evidence that others were suffering from decreased visitation and increased negative visitor feedback.²⁶
- 3.11 Visitor numbers for some national institutions continue to grow. For example, Questacon has had significant growth in visitor numbers over

19 Australian National Botanic Gardens, *Submission 15*, p. 10.

20 National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 1.

21 National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 1.

22 Mr David Thurrowgood, *Submission 61*, p. 2.

23 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 3.

24 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 2.

25 For example: Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 3; and Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 5.

26 For example: Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 5.

the past decade,²⁷ with attendance at its Centres in Canberra rising to 511 000 visitors in 2016-17.²⁸ A number of submitters attributed this to Questacon's effective brand as a national and international leader in the field of science communication. Since 2003, Questacon has also won six prestigious awards and reported a visitor satisfaction rating of 93 per cent.²⁹

- 3.12 The NGA told the committee that its visitor numbers had increased in the last three years from around 630 000 to approximately 900 000 per year.³⁰
- 3.13 On the other hand, not all of Canberra's national institutions are as well known or patronised. In particular, AIATSIS, which has historically served the academic and research community, 'has often been referred to as Australia's best kept secret'.³¹ AIATSIS received just 928 visits in 2016-17.³² AIATSIS submitted that the limited public visitation was largely due to the Institute's small public display area, but that recently it has focused on rebranding the organisation and modernising its online content to increase its reach, with an emphasis on Indigenous communities. Initiatives to support this have included the launch of a new website; digital, online and physical exhibitions; community visits and community research grants.³³
- 3.14 The Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc. (NFSA) advised the Committee that visits by school students to the NFSA dropped from 33 430 in 2008-9 to 13 056 in 2016-17.³⁴ It also stated that increased negative comments on forums such as *TripAdvisor* indicated that the NFSA has 'disappointed visitor expectations and lost its status as a top tourist attraction'.³⁵ The Friends suggested that this was due to reduced opening hours, the closure of an exhibition space, shop and library, and the cancellation of travelling festivals.³⁶
- 3.15 Most institutions reported collecting data on visitors to gain a better understanding of their audiences. For example, the Australian War

27 For example: Mr Neil Hermes, *Submission 9.1*, p. 1; Questacon Advisory Council, *Submission 29*, p. 3.

28 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 8.

29 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 5.

30 Mr Gerard Vaughan AM, Director, National Gallery of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 48.

31 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Submission 66*, p. 5.

32 GLAM Peak, *Submission 34*, p. 2.

33 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Submission 66*, p. 3.

34 Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 5.

35 Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 5.

36 Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 5.

Memorial (AWM) conducts a general visitor survey, as well as individual surveys.³⁷ However, the AWM said that there were challenges when interviewing visitors from a non-English speaking background.³⁸ Moreover, not all of the institutions that provided evidence to the Committee replicated the practice of collecting and analysing visitor data to improve their offerings, and the comprehensiveness of the data collected varied between institutions. For example, DPS conceded that its data collection and analysis about visitors to Parliament House was limited, and that there was a critical need to enhance this to improve visitor experience.³⁹

Collective branding and marketing

- 3.16 Evidence to the Committee highlighted that marketing national institutions as a collective group can attract school groups, domestic tourists and international travellers to the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).⁴⁰ The ACT Government said that as a collective brand, national institutions located in Canberra 'have the capacity to leave a lasting impression in the minds of all those who visit'.⁴¹ In order to maximise their profile and benefit from collective recognition, a number of the national institutions based in Canberra are members of tourism associations and participate in joint marketing efforts.⁴²
- 3.17 Most of Canberra's national institutions, including all of the large institutions, participate in the ACT Government's *VisitCanberra* initiative. The program delivers a range of marketing activities domestically and internationally, including in partnership with Tourism Australia and Singapore Airlines.⁴³ The ACT Government advised that the National Museum of Australia (NMA) and the NGA are the 'most active institutions in these international programs and maintain consistent investment to influence international markets'.⁴⁴ The Committee was also

37 Ms Anne Bennie, Assistant Director, Branch Head Public Programs, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 39.

38 Ms Anne Bennie, Assistant Director, Branch Head Public Programs, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 39.

39 Mr Rob Stefanic, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 20 September 2018, pp. 5 and 7.

40 ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 2.

41 ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 2.

42 For example: National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 5; National Capital Attractions Association, *Submission 55*, p. 2; Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 5.

43 ACT Government, *Submission 69.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 3.

44 ACT Government, *Submission 69.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 4.

advised that a select group of national institutions are currently collaborating with Tourism Australia, *VisitCanberra* and other cultural attractions across Australia to develop an 'international standard Australian signature cultural experience' which will aim to provide a 'product that delivers cultural enrichment in discovering the Australian story told through immersive art and history experiences'.⁴⁵

- 3.18 Some national institutions also work collaboratively to market to school groups visiting Canberra. In particular, evidence highlighted the work of the National Capital Educational Tourism Project (NCETP) which is administered by the tourism industry association, the National Capital Attractions Association (NCAA).⁴⁶ The NCETP undertakes brand and marketing activities 'based on the premise that schools are visiting Canberra, their National Capital and not any one individual institution or attraction'.⁴⁷ Currently, 22 attractions participate in the NCETP cooperative marketing program,⁴⁸ including some national institutions such as the Australian National Botanic Gardens, the CSIRO Discovery Centre, the National Archives of Australia and the High Court of Australia. The NCETP argued, however, that 'departmental constraints and fluctuations in funding' have affected the ability of some of the national institutions to join the Project.⁴⁹
- 3.19 While many of the institutions currently participate in joint marketing activities, a number of submitters to the inquiry believed that further promotion of the institutions as a collective brand could strengthen these initiatives.⁵⁰ For example, the NMA submitted that:

... there are significant opportunities to work more closely with other national institutions in co-branding and joint marketing efforts to advance the standing of these institutions as a group, both in Australia and overseas.⁵¹

45 ACT Government, *Submission 69.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 4.

46 For example: National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*; Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 8; Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 26; and Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 8.

47 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 5.

48 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 5.

49 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 6.

50 For example: National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*; Ms Marianne Albury-Colless, *Submission 53*, pp. [2-3]; National Capital Attractions Association Inc., *Submission 55*, p. 3; National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, pp. 4-5.

51 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 4.

- 3.20 The NMA believed that such activities could maximise the resources devoted to brand advancement and marketing of programs and services.⁵² The NCETP recommended the formation of an advisory board to drive collaborative marketing and branding.⁵³ The Secretary of DPS, Mr Rob Stefanic, acknowledged that the challenge is getting the current organisations that contribute to marketing to 'complement each other rather than compete'. He said that there is a willingness to collaborate but that national institutions 'have been functioning in [their] own silos for a very long time'.⁵⁴

Digital technologies

- 3.21 National institutions are increasingly engaging with new technologies in order to extend their outreach and engage with audiences in a more interactive manner. Digital initiatives include online libraries, official websites, social media, video conferences and live streams, and other written, photographic and video content.⁵⁵ Digital engagement has changed the way in which visitors interact with and experience national institutions.
- 3.22 This section will consider the use of digital technologies for public engagement. The issue of digitisation of national institutions' collections is discussed in chapter 5.

Digital interactive exhibitions

- 3.23 Increasingly cultural institutions around the world are integrating digital technologies into their physical exhibitions. The Committee received evidence that national institutions in Canberra are also beginning to integrate digital technologies into exhibitions to engage people in new ways and to encourage digital literacy and collaboration with visitors and online audiences.⁵⁶
- 3.24 For example, the NMA was the first national institution to adopt virtual reality programming in Canberra and the first to feature an immersive 3D sensory dome experience in its 2017 exhibition *Songlines: Tracking the Seven*

52 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, pp. 4-5.

53 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 6.

54 Mr Rob Stefanic, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 20 September 2018, p. 2.

55 Science and Technology Australia, *Submission 38*, p. 6.

56 Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 6.

- Sisters*.⁵⁷ The exhibition won the ‘Best in Show’ award at the annual Museums and Galleries National Awards ceremony for its strong use of technology, as well as its collaboration with the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra and Martu communities.⁵⁸
- 3.25 The AWM has also begun to experiment with new technologies through its *Battle of Hamel Virtual Reality Experience* that can be viewed at the Memorial with a headset or on YouTube at home.⁵⁹ Museums Galleries Australia observed that these digital technologies enable full immersion and can show objects at scale and in context.⁶⁰
- 3.26 The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) has an award-winning iPad application, *Headhunt!*, for visitors aged 7-15. The application, accessed via a complimentary iPad, encourages children to explore the Gallery independently and to look closely at the artwork that interests them.⁶¹ At the end of their visit, a report containing text, image and audio created by the child is generated automatically, allowing them to share what they have learnt.⁶² The Committee similarly saw touch screen technology in use during its visits to other institutions including the NMA, National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC) and the Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD).
- 3.27 To address growing audience expectations, a number of institutions are currently developing or piloting new programs that incorporate digital technologies. For example, the NFSA is developing a ‘pop-up’ NFSA that will use touch pad screens in public spaces across Australia to provide audiences customised access to collection material.⁶³ The AWM is developing a whole-of-Memorial audio guiding platform, intended to deliver a richer visitor experience including multi-lingual options.⁶⁴ In its submission to the inquiry, the NMA expressed a desire to embrace new forms of audience participation and engagement, including the use of digital technologies, in its gallery redevelopment program under its Master Plan.⁶⁵

57 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 5.

58 Museums Galleries Australia, ‘MAGNA 2018 Winners’, 2018, <https://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/magna-2018-winners>, viewed 24 September 2018.

59 CPSU, *Submission 12.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. [2].

60 Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 6.

61 National Portrait Gallery, ‘Headhunt!’ 2018, <https://www.portrait.gov.au/content/headhunt/>, viewed 24 September 2018.

62 National Portrait Gallery, ‘Headhunt!’ 2018, <https://www.portrait.gov.au/content/headhunt/>, viewed 24 September 2018.

63 National Film and Sound Archive, *Submission 28*, p. 6.

64 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 6.

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

3.28 However, some inquiry participants suggested that digital innovation at Canberra's national institutions has not kept pace with initiatives around the world and that more could be done in this area.⁶⁶ The Committee was told that changing audience expectations put institutions at risk if they do not modernise their displays. For example, the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Tom Rogers, observed:

As children in primary schools in particular are exposed to more and higher tech versions of displays and institutions that they visit, what they see when they come to our education centre will eventually – not at the moment – become dated, and that will impact on the experience. So there's a point at which we will need to consider potentially a redesign of the offering... That's probably a future challenge and something we need to keep a very close eye on.⁶⁷

Online presence

3.29 The increased use of the internet by national institutions for promotion and marketing was noted above. Just as importantly, in recent years, many national institutions, including AIATSIS, AWM and the NFSA, have either begun to develop or have launched new websites and new ways of using the internet for interactive engagement with the public. Many national institutions' websites now include searchable collections, online booking systems, retail outlets and publications.⁶⁸

3.30 Evidence to the inquiry indicated that these initiatives have led to an increase in website visitations. For example, after launching its new website, the NFSA reported increased unique website visits and page-views. This coincided with increased social media and newsletter subscriptions. The new website also won four communications awards.⁶⁹

3.31 The NMA has also emphasised online engagement, and told the Committee that 'the page views on our website and the capacity people have to visit the museum virtually has grown to the point that more than five million visits have been made to that site'.⁷⁰

66 For example: Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 12; and Ms Marianne Albury-Colless, *Submission 53*, p. [3].

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

68 Meredith Hinchliffe, Ms Carolyn Forster OAM and Ms Sandy Forbes, *Submission 56*, p. 3.

69 National Film and Sound Archive, *Submission 28*, p. 6.

70 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 46.

- 3.32 The Committee's visit to MoAD in particular highlighted the institution as a leader in the online space, with a virtual classroom experience (discussed later in this chapter) as well as digital storytelling initiatives using chatbots and Twitter. The Museum has been recognised for its use of innovative education technology.⁷¹
- 3.33 Some institutions, such as the NFSA and AWM, also hold online exhibitions.⁷² Online presence, in particular curated access to material, can allow institutions to reach wider audiences. Evidence to the inquiry indicated, however, that online curation is resource intensive and requires expertise to ensure rich visitor experiences.⁷³
- 3.34 While increased online engagement was generally regarded by national institutions as both necessary and beneficial, some submitters were cautious about its potential impact. Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly, Shane Rattenbury MLA and Caroline Le Couteur MLA expressed concern that increased online presence may minimise the importance of the physical presence of national institutions in Canberra.⁷⁴ Science & Technology Australia believed that 'the value of face-to-face engagement at our national institutions cannot be entirely replaced using digital tools'. Instead, the organisation suggested that digital access should serve as a gateway that encourages Australians to access collections in person through outreach programs, or by visiting Canberra.⁷⁵ The Friends of the NFSA also submitted that online engagement should complement rather than replace person-to-person experiences.⁷⁶ Similarly, during the Committee's visit to MoAD, the Museum indicated that it viewed digital engagement ideally as a tool to encourage and supplement, rather than substitute for, visiting the institution itself.
- 3.35 In addition, while greater online presence has extended the reach of national institutions to new audiences, evidence suggested that not everyone accesses these websites. The Australian Society of Archivists submitted that according to the most recent report on Australia's Digital Inclusion Index, people within the national capital, who can access the collections physically, may also be the most likely to access them digitally. In contrast, remote and regional Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities and women over 65, are less likely to

71 Museum of Australian Democracy, *Submission 37*, pp. 3-4.

72 See: Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 6, Meredith Hinchliffe, Ms Carolyn Forster OAM and Ms Sandy Forbes, *Submission 56*, p. 3.

73 Canberra Business Chamber, *Submission 58*, p. 6.

74 Shane Rattenbury MLA and Caroline Le Couteur MLA, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

75 Science & Technology Australia, *Submission 38*, p. 6.

76 Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive, *Submission 13*, p. 7.

access digital material hosted by national institutions. The Society recommended core, targeted funding aimed at improving access for these groups.⁷⁷

Social media

- 3.36 National institutions are using social media platforms to engage with the public in new ways. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube allow institutions to promote programs and events to targeted audiences.⁷⁸ In particular, social media enables institutions to attract new audiences, including teenagers and young people.⁷⁹ It also assists institutions to reach out to audiences beyond Canberra.⁸⁰
- 3.37 A number of institutions reported using social media in innovative ways to enable audiences across Australia to engage with their programs and collections. For example, the AWM live streams the Last Post Ceremony on YouTube and Facebook every day, allowing people to view, comment and participate in the ceremony.⁸¹ Questacon is also active across a number of social media platforms. The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS), which administers Questacon, advised that social media channels are a valuable way to engage with Questacon's national audience, including visitors and participants in events as well as other groups such as delivery partners, financial partners, industry, education and government organisations.⁸² Questacon's YouTube Channel delivers digital engagement in science and technology through video productions from Questacon programs, and streaming and archiving of events held at the Centre.⁸³ The Department advised that there have been over 1.9 million individual views of these videos.⁸⁴
- 3.38 Social media enables dialogue between institutions and community members, and encourages the public to become co-producers of knowledge.⁸⁵ MoAD argued that social media has allowed it to 'reflect democratic traditions of debate and conversation'.⁸⁶ The Museum told the

77 Australian Society of Archivists, *Submission 51*, p. 4.

78 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 6.

79 Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD), *Submission 43*, p. [5].

80 Ms Sally Barnes, Chief Executive Officer, National Capital Authority, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 3.

81 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 6.

82 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 6.

83 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 6.

84 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 6.

85 Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD), *Submission 43*, p. 5.

86 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [3].

Committee that its Facebook page has served as a 'platform for robust, respectful discussions about Australia's democracy, and our social and political history'.⁸⁷ The Museum highlighted that a recent post about the 1996 gun reforms led to an 'insightful and productive debate about gun ownership' that received approximately 1 000 comments and reached close to 30 000 people.⁸⁸ Moreover, MoAD's Director, Ms Daryl Karp, said that by encouraging such open dialogue the Museum has gained insight into public opinion on democracy in Australia.⁸⁹

Trove

The Committee heard that the NLA has been particularly successful in creating a strong online presence, through its Trove service.⁹⁰ Trove provides Australians with access to the collections of hundreds of libraries, museums, galleries, archives, and historical associations from across Australia.⁹¹ Since its launch in 2009 Trove has developed a large audience with nearly 250 000 registered public users and more than 20 million unique users each year.⁹²

The Committee was advised that Trove is particularly successful in engaging the community with digital collections.⁹³ One contributor to the inquiry described the impact that the service has had, particularly that it has:

...created a richer and more successful engagement experience for all Australians. It is a unique collaboration on a scale that has surpassed every other national information service except for the Bureau of Meteorology.⁹⁴

The Australian Historical Association submitted that Trove has had a transformative effect on the capacity of historians to undertake research.⁹⁵

Trove also provides a unique opportunity for users to be part of the creation and enhancement of the service. The public is able to add knowledge to digital collection items through tags and comments, and curate publicly shareable lists on a range of topics. Moreover, individuals and community groups are able to correct lines of text generated by software used to digitise newspaper images.⁹⁶ This has provided communities with the opportunity to ensure that their local or regional newspapers are represented accurately.

87 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [3].

88 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [3].

89 Ms Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy, Old Parliament House, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August, p. 19.

90 ANU School of Art and Design, *Submission 64*, p. 2.

91 National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 1.

92 Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 2.

93 Australian National University, *Submission 68*, p. [2].

94 Name withheld, *Submission 40*, p. 2.

95 Australian Historical Association, *Submission 35*, p. [2].

96 National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, pp. 1-2.

As of April 2018, digital volunteers had corrected 266.45 million lines of text. One individual, John Warren, has personally contributed nearly 5 million lines of text. The NLA has estimated that the value of this work is approximately \$46.3 million.⁹⁷

The Government allocated \$16.4 million to the NLA for the period 2016-17 to 2019-20 to support Trove, through the Public Service Modernisation Fund.⁹⁸ The NLA advised that this funding is being used for upgrading critical digital infrastructure, enhancing digital engagement opportunities, and increasing the number of Australian cultural collections accessible via Trove. Despite this investment, there is concern about the sustainability of Trove post June 2020, when the modernisation funding will cease.⁹⁹ In particular, submitters highlighted that attempts to reduce funding to Trove in the 2016-17 Budget had raised concerns within the community about the future of Trove specifically, and the national institutions more broadly.¹⁰⁰

Engaging under-represented visitors

- 3.39 One issue raised during the inquiry was the demographic profile of those who visit and engage with Canberra's national institutions – and more specifically, those groups within the Australian community who may not be sufficiently represented in visitor numbers. While some institutions identified a need to attract more young adults, others emphasised the importance of national institutions doing more to reach Indigenous and multicultural communities. There was also discussion about how best to cater for groups with special requirements.
- 3.40 These gaps in engagement were linked by some to a lack of representation of these groups in national institutions' collections and exhibitions. Director-General of the NLA, Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, observed that 'if people don't see themselves in our collections, then [the institutions] actually don't have anything for them'.¹⁰¹
- 3.41 Museums Galleries Australia submitted that to ensure inclusivity in collections and major exhibitions, institutions could utilise 'more collaborative methods, such as prototyping approaches, and exhibitions

97 National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, pp. 1-2.

98 Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 21.

99 National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 3; Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 21.

100 For example: CPSU, *Submission 12*, p. 22; Australian Society of Archivists, *Submission 51*, p. 4; Shane Rattenbury MLA and Caroline Le Couteur MLA, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

101 Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 18.

co-developed with the citizens/users/visitors' backgrounds engaged from the start'. Museums Galleries Australia noted that a number of institutions have successfully engaged communities in the development of exhibitions, citing the NMA's *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*, and MoAD's *The "Power of Us": How Australians imagine their Democracy* as examples.¹⁰²

3.42 From another perspective, reflecting on his experience from overseas, former NGA Director Mr Gerard Vaughan told the Committee that:

One of the things that can work really well...is to find funding to bring people in from special groups...Making that really easy and bringing communities in was a very, very powerful thing to do. There must be some version of that that could apply in Canberra.¹⁰³

Young adults

3.43 One group that was identified by national institutions as being underrepresented as visitors was young adults. Evidence to the Committee canvassed initiatives that some institutions have undertaken to increase the representation of young people that engage with institutions.

3.44 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director of the NMA, told the Committee that attracting young people between 16 to 25 years of age was an 'obvious challenge' for institutions. In attempting to cater to this audience, Dr Trinca advised that:

All of us, and certainly the National Museum, now have programs devoted to trying to involve those audiences in what we do. There are nights when we open the museum. We change the quality of programming to draw people, very expressly, in the under-30 category. They have been successful in broadening the reach of institutions like ours ...¹⁰⁴

3.45 Dr Trinca provided the Committee with the example of the NMA's 2016 exhibition, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, that trialled evening opening hours. Patronage to the exhibition as a result was much higher than anticipated and included significant visitation from those in the 16 to 30 age group, leading Dr Trinca to observe that:

102 Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 6.

103 Mr Gerard Vaughan AM, Director, National Gallery of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 53.

104 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 51.

...when the exhibition is right and when the quality of the work is very high, young people will come to these places, if you give them the opportunity for access.¹⁰⁵

- 3.46 The National Gallery of Australia submitted that it had also worked to engage young adults through social media events (Instameets), fashion partnerships, and contemporary art parties.¹⁰⁶
- 3.47 Mr Angus Trumble, Gallery Director of the NPG, stressed to the Committee that national institutions must consider that they 'are competing with other forms of recreation and entertainment and diversion'. National institutions may need to consider matters such as extended or modified opening hours to cater for patrons, such as young people, who may not be able to attend institutions during standard business hours. Mr Trumble added that any such initiatives would be contingent on the availability of resources.¹⁰⁷
- 3.48 The engagement of national institutions with school students through the education system is discussed later in this chapter.

Indigenous Australians

- 3.49 Inquiry participants also expressed concern to the Committee about low patronage of Canberra's national institutions by Indigenous Australians. This was despite many institutions holding collections relevant and likely to be of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the NGA's large collection of Indigenous art and the records held by the NAA. Witnesses at public hearings advised about initiatives and exhibitions that aimed to provide better representation and inclusivity for Indigenous Australians within their offerings.
- 3.50 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director of the AWM, told the Committee that he would like to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from more remote parts of the country visiting the Memorial. He spoke of the AWM's efforts to attract more Indigenous visitors, including that it is:
- ...currently touring 'For country, for Nation', an exhibition we built specifically to tell the story of Indigenous service over 120 years. We had a visit late last year of kids from Tennant Creek – not just Aboriginal kids but non-Aboriginal kids as well. When they came into the memorial and saw the APY Lands painting

105 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 53.

106 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 4.

107 Mr Angus Trumble, Gallery Director, National Portrait Gallery of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, pp. 52-53.

greet them opposite the Gallipoli landing boat, their eyes were like saucers...when you go through the Roll of Honour, Aboriginal people are more than well represented among the Western Australians and the South Australians.¹⁰⁸

- 3.51 The NAA told the Committee that it engages with Indigenous communities through its state and territory offices as well as Aboriginal advisory groups.¹⁰⁹
- 3.52 Dr Ayres from the NLA believed that it could do more to better engage with Indigenous communities, advising the Committee that:
- ...for the next two or three years it's all about bringing our Indigenous material to the surface – especially next year with the International Year of Indigenous Languages, we're focusing on making sure that what we have is more visible.¹¹⁰
- 3.53 Mr Craig Ritchie of AIATSIS expressed the view that an Indigenous national institution within the Parliamentary Zone would be powerfully significant. Mr Ritchie also noted the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people curating their own stories.¹¹¹ This issue is discussed further in chapter 4.

Migrant and multicultural communities

- 3.54 The Committee was particularly interested in the role that national institutions could play in connecting new migrants to Australia's history and culture. While the Committee was told that research indicated that 'newly arrived Australians are sometimes more likely to visit Canberra than established ones',¹¹² it was clear that a number of challenges in engaging with new migrants existed including language barriers¹¹³ and a lack of understanding of relevant rules or protocols.¹¹⁴

108 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 39.

109 Ms Phyllis Williams, Regional Manager, North, National Archives of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 18.

110 Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General, National Library of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 18.

111 Mr Craig Ritchie, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 58.

112 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 52. See also Ms Sharon Bailey, Acting Group Manager Settlement Services Group, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 38.

113 Ms Anne Bennie, Assistant Director, Branch Head Public Programs, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 39.

114 Ms Sharon Bailey, Acting Group Manager Settlement Services Group, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 38.

- 3.55 The Department of Social Services (DSS) proposed that providing general information, such as that many institutions and exhibitions are free, may encourage people to engage with the institutions.¹¹⁵ It also noted the importance of assessing migrant settlement patterns and providing information in a range of different languages.¹¹⁶
- 3.56 DSS acknowledged that it does not currently have an overt focus on how national institutions could connect new migrants to Australian culture and history. However, the Department expressed a willingness to 'work more closely with the national public institutions so they could be part of [the] settlement and cohesion framework'.¹¹⁷ In particular, DSS noted the potential to share information with the national institutions regarding settlement patterns and the current main languages of new arrivals. The Department also indicated the possibility of connecting the national institutions to the pre-existing networks that it has with service providers and community leaders that could lead to joint projects.¹¹⁸

Special access programs

- 3.57 Specialised services, facilities and programs can provide opportunities for community members who may otherwise have difficulty engaging with national institutions. Special access programs are run by national institutions, contributing to the health and social well-being of people with special needs,¹¹⁹ very young children and their families,¹²⁰ and people from multicultural backgrounds.¹²¹
- 3.58 Some of the programs provided by institutions include:

115 Ms Sharon Bailey, Acting Group Manager Settlement Services Group, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 38.

116 Ms Sharon Bailey, Acting Group Manager Settlement Services Group, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 39.

117 Ms Sharon Bailey, Acting Group Manager Settlement Services Group, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 38.

118 Ms Sharon Bailey, Acting Group Manager Settlement Services Group, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 38.

119 For example: National Gallery of Australia's Voluntary Guides Association, *Submission 11*, p. 3; ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 5.

120 For example: Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [3]; National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 3.

121 For example: Australian National Botanic Gardens, *Submission 15*, p. 13; Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 4.

- Art and Dementia Tours, at the NGA and NPG, that provide people living with dementia an opportunity to connect with the world of art;¹²²
 - after-hours tours with lowered audio levels at the AWM for veterans impacted by their deployment;¹²³
 - Questacon's *Little Explorers* day, held in February 2018, which included discounted entry and special displays targeted for children 0-6 years of age;¹²⁴ and
 - the ANBG's 'China Ready' strategy, implemented with the commencement of direct flights from Singapore to Canberra, that included Chinese visitor guides and maps combined with staff training.¹²⁵
- 3.59 The Cultural Facilities Corporation submitted that specialised programs can contribute to broader social wellbeing and positive health outcomes for participants.¹²⁶ Such programs can also strengthen an institution's ability to support people with specific needs more broadly. For example, DISS reflected that the Questacon Autism Access Day, in collaboration with the Marymead Autism Centre, resulted in greater autism awareness and confidence for staff, and led to the creation of permanent resources that enhance access for people with autism.¹²⁷
- 3.60 Inquiry participants were of the view that specialised programs also help to attract new and hard to reach audiences.¹²⁸ For example, approximately 1 900 people attended the Questacon *Little Explorers* day, far exceeding the usual attendance of 200 to 440 visitors for a Monday in February.¹²⁹
- 3.61 At the same time, the popularity of these events can present challenges. For example, the AWM submitted that it had experienced significant pressure on its 'requested tours model' over the past two years.¹³⁰ The Memorial flagged its intention to develop and implement a 'paid tour model' that would incorporate both guide led and audio/digital tour

122 For example: National Gallery of Australia's Voluntary Guides Association, *Submission 11*, p. 3; Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, pp. 4-5; Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 7; ACT Government, *Submission 69*, p. 5.

123 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 4.

124 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 7.

125 Australian National Botanic Gardens, *Submission 15*, p. 13.

126 Cultural Facilities Corporation, *Submission 48*, p. 2.

127 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 7.

128 Hon Professor Michael Gore AO, *Submission 8*, p. [1].

129 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 7.

130 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 9.

products available within and outside of opening hours. Multilingual options would be part of this offering.¹³¹

- 3.62 More broadly, the NGA highlighted that in 2015, it introduced a Visitor Experience Team.¹³² The Gallery said that the team supports general queries for visitors as well as addressing issues as they arise. The Gallery explained that this new approach has ensured that visitor needs are met and has led to a positive cultural change within the organisation.¹³³

Education

- 3.63 As mentioned in chapter 2, school visits and programs form a very significant part of the work of Canberra's national institutions. Several offer outreach programs that complement the Australian Curriculum at both the primary and secondary levels. This includes physical visits by school groups to Canberra, loans of educational material, regional tours such as the *Questacon Shell Science Circus*,¹³⁴ and virtual classroom programs.

School excursions to Canberra

- 3.64 Annually, more than 165 000 students from all over Australia travel to Canberra on school visits. Evidence was given to the Committee that on average 49 students participate in each excursion and visit 12 attractions over a period of three days.¹³⁵ In order to provide students with meaningful experiences, most of Canberra's national institutions provide tailored programs for school groups.¹³⁶ These programs are often delivered in conjunction with educational materials distributed by the

131 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 9.

132 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 3.

133 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 3.

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

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

136 For example: National Gallery of Australia's Voluntary Guides Association, *Submission 11*, p. 2; Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, pp. 6-7; National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 3; Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, pp. [2-3]; Ms Philippa Lynch, Chief Executive, and Principal Registrar, High Court of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 24 August 2018, p. 6; Dr Judy West, Executive Director, Australian National Botanic Gardens, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 16 August 2018, p. 5; and Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 21.

- institutions. This includes pre- and post-visit activities that can be delivered in the classroom, along with digital learning resources.¹³⁷
- 3.65 The NCETP told the Committee that visiting Canberra's national institutions supports a student's education and provides them with a greater understanding of the role of government, law and democracy. It submitted that school students who have visited a parliament or national institution rank six percentile points higher in the National Assessment Program (NAPLAN) Civics and Citizenship results than students who have not.¹³⁸
- 3.66 In addition to educational programs in civics and citizenship, there is also a strong and growing engagement by visiting students in programs delivered by national institutions focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) informed the Committee that it worked with students and teachers to understand how science is applied 'in the real world' and how scientific knowledge may translate into a career path.¹³⁹ As part of its site visits, the Committee also had the opportunity to visit and observe student and educator interaction at Questacon's Ian Potter Foundation Technology Learning Centre. The visit provided the Committee with an insight into how Questacon is helping to prepare Australia's next generation of scientists.
- 3.67 Many of the national institutions' educational programs are well received. For example, the NEEC reported having a visitor satisfaction rating of about 96 per cent, and almost 100 per cent of teachers suggesting the presenter was engaging and the session met curriculum needs.¹⁴⁰ The Australian Science Teachers Association strongly commended the work of Questacon and the NCETP in support of upskilling Australia's science teachers, and argued that 'there is a very viable case to boost their collective capacities to maximise their impact'.¹⁴¹

137 For example: Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 7; Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 21.

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

139 Ms Mary Mulcahy, Director, Education and Research, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 33. See also Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*.

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

141 Australian Science Teachers Association, *Submission 33*, p. [2].

- 3.68 While some programs, such as those offered by the NEEC, are free,¹⁴² other institutions offer paid packages for school groups. For example, the 'Q by Night' program run by Questacon is available to both primary and secondary school groups. The package includes an exclusive guided tour of Questacon's galleries and catering options for dinner.¹⁴³
- 3.69 The NCETP told the Committee that there is a high demand from school groups to participate in national institutions' programs.¹⁴⁴ Mr Jeff Pope from the Australian Electoral Commission provided a clear example, advising that the NEEC runs up to 18 sessions a day, with a session starting approximately every half hour. Often, the NEEC is booked out two years in advance, and as of 30 August 2018, the NEEC had 56 schools on the waiting list seeking bookings in 2018-19.¹⁴⁵ Mr Pope reflected that keeping up with demand whilst delivering a high standard of product is an ongoing challenge.¹⁴⁶
- 3.70 To alleviate some of the pressure on national institutions from school bookings, the NCAA recommended extending the opening hours of key institutions so that more school groups can visit.¹⁴⁷ However, Mr Pope observed that extended hours 'can be a little problematic, given that these are school children, most of them primary kids, on camp'.¹⁴⁸ It was also noted that the demand on school tours was not constant throughout the year, with demand increasing during the school terms and when Parliament is sitting.¹⁴⁹
- 3.71 While evidence received by the Committee supported the great benefits to students from excursions to Canberra, submitters and witnesses expressed concern that insufficient resources or facilities has limited the ability of some of the national institutions to conduct education programs. For

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

143 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. [3].

144 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 8.

145 Australian Electoral Commission, *Submission 79*, p. [3]; Mr Jeff Pope, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 24.

146 Mr Jeff Pope, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 24.

147 Dr Naomi Dale, President, National Capital Attractions Association, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August, p. 36.

148 Mr Jeff Pope, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 24.

149 For example: National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 8 and Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 26.

example, the NAA has suspended its schools program, as well as broader public programs, while the building it was previously located in undergoes remediation works, and submitted that its lack of a purpose built and dedicated building ‘limit[s] the scope, scale and diversity of services, education and cultural engagement experiences it can deliver’.¹⁵⁰

3.72 More broadly, Mr Noel Langdon suggested that there is currently a lack of available trained staff to meet the demand in the education tourism market. He proposed that this has resulted in more than 40 000 children per year being unable to fulfil the democracy and civics aspect of their school curriculum.¹⁵¹ Evidence also suggested that current resourcing has the potential to constrain an institution’s ability to innovate in its delivery of school programs. For example, the NGA expressed interest in creating a new education curriculum-based unit for students and teachers across Australia. However, the Gallery submitted that such a program would require new resourcing.¹⁵²

3.73 The NCETP identified that ancillary resources, such as accommodation and transport, were also part of the broader supply chain that facilitated school excursions. The availability of these was a key part of the school excursion experience ensuring that ‘when the kids appear at the steps of Parliament House they’re well-fed, well-organised and ready for an engaging program’.¹⁵³ The NCETP advised the Committee that on average, students stay in Canberra for three nights and that the ‘ACT government has supported this endeavour by helping to provide more accommodation’.¹⁵⁴

The PACER program

3.74 To support school excursions to Canberra, the Department of Education and Training (DEET) administers the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) program.¹⁵⁵ The program, developed in 2006,¹⁵⁶

150 National Archives of Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 7.

151 Mr Noel Langdon, *Submission 77*, p. 3.

152 National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 5.

153 Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 35.

154 Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 35.

155 Australian Government, ‘Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate’, www.pacer.org.au, viewed 15 January 2019.

156 Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 26.

subsidises the cost of travel to Canberra for students in Years 4 to 12 and emphasises civics and citizenship education.¹⁵⁷

- 3.75 To be eligible for program funding, students are required to visit Parliament House, the AWM, and at least one of the two national institutions at Old Parliament House: MoAD and the NEEC.¹⁵⁸
- 3.76 To qualify for PACER funding, schools must be located at least 150 kilometres from Canberra. Rebates are paid on a sliding scale, as set out in Table 3.1, with greater funding allocated to schools that are located further from Canberra.¹⁵⁹ Table 3.2 below shows the number of schools from each state and territory that received PACER funding in recent years.

Table 3.1 PACER rebate amounts

Distance From Canberra	Funds allocated per student
150-499 kilometres	\$20
500-999 kilometres	\$30
1 000-1 499 kilometres	\$60
1 500-1 999 kilometres	\$80
2 000-2 499 kilometres	\$120
2 500-2 999 kilometres including all schools from Tasmania	\$150
3 000-3 999 kilometres	\$240
4 000 kilometres and over	\$260

Source Department of Education and Training, *Submission 80, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 2.*

- 3.77 DEET advised that in the 2017-18 financial year, a total of 1 804 schools received PACER support.¹⁶⁰ This accounted for more than 97 500 students.¹⁶¹ Evidence to the inquiry suggested that many of the schools that visit Canberra through PACER also visit other national institutions. For example, in the 2016-17 financial year, 88 per cent of schools that sought PACER funding also attended Questacon while in Canberra.¹⁶²

157 Mrs Margaret Leggett, Branch Manager, Curriculum Branch, Department of Education and Training, *Committee Hansard, Canberra, 24 August, p. 27.*

158 Mrs Margaret Leggett, Branch Manager, Curriculum Branch, Department of Education and Training, *Committee Hansard, Canberra, 24 August, p. 27.*

159 Department of Education and Training, *Submission 80, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 2.*

160 Mrs Margaret Leggett, Branch Manager, Curriculum Branch, Department of Education and Training, *Committee Hansard, Canberra, 24 August, p. 27.*

161 Mrs Margaret Leggett, Branch Manager, Curriculum Branch, Department of Education and Training, *Committee Hansard, Canberra, 24 August, p. 27.*

162 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67.1, Answer to Question on Notice, p. [1].*

Table 3.2 PACER schools per state/territory participation figures

State/Territory	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
New South Wales	980	968	976
Queensland	315	316	316
Victoria	352	352	361
Western Australia	157	155	160
South Australia	161	140	160
Tasmania	40	43	50
Northern Territory	15	18	19
Total	2020	1992	2042

Source Department of Education and Training, Submission 80, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 1.

3.78 The NCETP advised the Committee that both students and teachers rated the program highly.¹⁶³ However, many inquiry participants suggested that the program could be strengthened.¹⁶⁴ Recommendations to improve PACER included:

- expanding the number of institutions included on both the mandatory and optional visit list;¹⁶⁵
- introducing subsidies based on additional criteria such as schools' socio-economic status or inclusion of disabled students;¹⁶⁶
- increasing funding of PACER to enable more school groups to visit;¹⁶⁷
- increasing the resourcing, staffing and opening hours at popular national institutions, specifically to cater for the lengthy waiting list of schools wishing to participate in the program;¹⁶⁸ and
- improving access to the program for students with special needs.¹⁶⁹

163 Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August, p. 37.

164 For example: Ms Kareena Arthy, Deputy Director-General, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 13.

165 Dr Mathew Trinca, Director, National Museum of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, pp. 53-54.

166 For example: The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, pp. 39-40; and Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 35.

167 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 11.

168 See for example: Dr Naomi Dale, President, National Capital Attractions Association, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 36; Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 37; Australian Electoral Commission, *Submission 79*, Answer to Question on Notice p. [3].

169 Mr Garry Watson, Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 35.

- 3.79 The Director of the AWM, The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, argued that PACER is failing to adequately support schools located in regional and remote locations across Australia.¹⁷⁰ He said that he would like to see PACER 'disproportionately and unashamedly focused on kids from remote parts of the country that are a far distance from Canberra'.¹⁷¹
- 3.80 Concern was also raised that the current PACER subsidies do not adequately reflect the cost of an excursion to Canberra or sufficiently consider additional factors that may increase the cost of an excursion. The NCETP submitted that the average cost of an excursion to Canberra has doubled from \$400 to \$800 per person over the last few years whilst PACER payments have remained static.¹⁷² Dr Nelson suggested linking PACER subsidies for schools to socio-economic status scores as well as geographic distance from Canberra,¹⁷³ although DEET advised the Committee that this is not under consideration.¹⁷⁴
- 3.81 DEET acknowledged that many students do not have the opportunity to visit Canberra, despite the PACER scheme. The Department advised that it is currently considering how this can be addressed, including through virtual and other outreach programs. The Department acknowledged that 'there is also a capacity issue in terms of the available funding and what can be covered' by PACER, and that while increasing travel costs were under consideration, PACER is a subsidy and 'not designed to cover the full rate'.¹⁷⁵

Digital classrooms

- 3.82 To provide greater access to students outside Canberra, several institutions utilise digital technologies such as webinars and digital excursions.¹⁷⁶ For example, Questacon has used high-definition video conference facilities to stream live and interactive science demonstrations to school students in their own classrooms across Australia. The

170 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 40.

171 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 40.

172 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 11.

173 The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 40.

174 Department of Education and Training, *Submission 80*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 4.

175 Mrs Margaret Leggett, Branch Manager, Curriculum Branch, Department of Education and Training, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August, p. 29.

176 For example: National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 3; Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [4].

Committee was told that between 2010 and 2015 more than 450 video conferences were held, reaching more than 13 000 students nationally.¹⁷⁷

- 3.83 MoAD advised the Committee that it has recently begun rolling out a primary school program ‘Democracy, Media and Me’ that uses video conferencing to reach regional and remote schools. The Museum is also developing a secondary school program with the hope of doubling the number of school students who access its civics and citizenship program within the next five years.¹⁷⁸ During its site visit to the Museum, the Committee observed MoAD’s pilot digital excursion program, which allowed students to undertake a virtual tour of the Museum while interacting with trained staff. Ms Daryl Karp said that this is about:

...creating a program of what we do that we can take to those schools that aren’t able to come to the national capital but to still give them what I call a ‘national capital experience’. It’s not a distance education – that is, something that could be delivered by anyone anywhere. It’s trying to recreate what we do so well, which is an absolutely transformative learning experience that is in situ, in the building, that gives [the audience] a sense of the chambers and a sense of the space.¹⁷⁹

- 3.84 The Committee was advised that similar digital classroom initiatives either exist or are being rolled out at other national institutions including the AWM,¹⁸⁰ NAA,¹⁸¹ and NMA.¹⁸²

Public outreach beyond Canberra

- 3.85 A key function of many of Canberra’s national institutions is to provide access to their collections for all Australians. As previously discussed in this chapter, digital technologies have extended the potential audience of national institutions’ collections across Australia, and internationally.¹⁸³
- 3.86 In addition, many national institutions bring their collections and experiences directly to people in regional and remote locations through outreach programs across Australia, including:

177 Raytheon, *Submission 73*, p. 2.

178 Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, *Submission 37*, p. [4].

179 Ms Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy, Old Parliament House, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 17.

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

181 National Archives of Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 22.

182 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 6.

183 National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, p. 4.

- travelling exhibitions;¹⁸⁴
 - loaning works from collections to galleries, museums and libraries across Australia and overseas;¹⁸⁵
 - educational outreach programs¹⁸⁶ including loans of learning resources to schools and local community groups;¹⁸⁷
 - partnering with communities;¹⁸⁸ and
 - conferences.¹⁸⁹
- 3.87 Funding for travelling exhibitions is provided to the National Collecting Institutions through the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach (NCITO) program, administered by the Department of Communications and the Arts. The Department expressed the view that the NCITO's current funding envelope of \$1 million per annum is sufficient.¹⁹⁰ The Department advised that since 2009 the NCITO program has provided funding for the display of 312 exhibitions in 153 venues across Australia.¹⁹¹
- 3.88 In the science sector, DIIS advised that Questacon's travelling exhibitions had engaged over 7.6 million people in Australia and internationally between 1990 and March 2018, including 4.9 million people in regional and remote areas of Australia.¹⁹²
- 3.89 Two Canberra-based national institutions, the NAA and the NFSA, have physical state offices in Sydney and Melbourne and access centres in other states.¹⁹³ The NAA is the only institution based in Canberra to have a

184 For example: National Capital Authority, *Submission 63*, p. [6]; Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, pp. 4, 9, 10 and 13; Mr Gerard Vaughan AM, Gallery Director, National Gallery of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 48.

185 For example: National Film and Sound Archive, *Submission 28*, p. 6; Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 8; National Library of Australia, *Submission 41*, p. 3; National Gallery of Australia, *Submission 47*, p. 4; National Museum of Australia, *Submission 59*, pp. 1 and 6.

186 For example: Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, *Submission 67*, p. 7; Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 21.

187 For example: Australian War Memorial, *Submission 32*, p. 7.

188 For example: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Submission 66*, p. 8.

189 For example: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Submission 66*, p. 10; and Mr Jeff Pope, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 August 2018, p. 25.

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

191 Department of Communications and the Arts, *Submission 1.1*, Answer to Question on Notice, p. 3.

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

193 Australian Society of Archivists, *Submission 51*, p. 5.

- national footprint with public access offices, reading rooms, community outreach programs and storage repositories located in the capital cities of all states and territories,¹⁹⁴ although the Australian Society of Archivists expressed concern to the Committee that about ‘successive closure of state offices, reduced reading room hours, and the extension of user-pays online access to digital copies’.¹⁹⁵
- 3.90 Inquiry participants contended that outreach services and travelling exhibitions offered by the national institutions ‘provide valuable educational and cultural connections for people outside of the ACT’.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, it was submitted that travelling exhibitions can assist galleries in regional areas to network and collaborate with other galleries in their region.¹⁹⁷ The Canberra Business Chamber suggested that outreach is a ‘fundamental way of promoting Australian culture and heritage and...sharing the nation’s assets’.¹⁹⁸
- 3.91 Science & Technology Australia believed that more could be done to promote outreach programs offered by national institutions. It recommended a collaborative approach supporting the development of a single website that hosts up-to-date information on regional programs offered by all national institutions.¹⁹⁹
- 3.92 However, Honest History expressed concern that some travelling exhibitions carry the risk of taking an institution’s collection out of context, or place an overemphasis on ‘entertainment value rather than representativeness’.²⁰⁰ The NCETP said that it was supportive of regional outreach, but contended that funding for these programs should not come at the expense of the programs available at institutions in Canberra.²⁰¹
- 3.93 A number of submitters and witnesses expressed concern that national institutions based in Canberra have significantly reduced their outreach programs in recent years.²⁰² For example, the Committee was told that the

194 National Archives of Australia, *Submission 54*, p. 7.

195 Australian Society of Archivists, *Submission 51*, p. 5.

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

197 Meredith Hinchliffe, Carolyn Forster OAM and Sandy Forbes, *Submission 56*, p. 4.

198 Canberra Business Chamber, *Submission 58*, p. 6.

199 Science & Technology Australia, *Submission 38*, p. 5.

200 Honest History, *Submission 14*, p. 6.

201 National Capital Educational Tourism Project, *Submission 26*, p. 10.

202 For example: Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 8; Dr David Marshall AM, *Submission 20*, p. [1]; Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 8; Cultural Facilities Corporation, *Submission 48*, p. 3; Australian Society of Archivists Inc., *Submission 51*, p. 5; Meredith Hinchliffe, Carolyn Forster OAM and Sandy Forbes, *Submission 56*, p. 4.; Canberra Business Chamber, *Submission 58*, p. 6; Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister

NFSA's 'Big Screen' travelling festival was suspended in 2015, and the loans of films and DVDs to institutions and film societies have decreased whilst fees have risen.²⁰³ The Cultural Facilities Corporation suggested that the NFSA is not the only institution to have decreased loans of its collection, submitting that 'many national institutions have increased the number and level of costs, and extended the advance timelines applied to the loan of collection material'.²⁰⁴

- 3.94 Evidence to the Committee suggested that ongoing budget reductions have significantly contributed to the paring back of outreach programs.²⁰⁵ Museums Galleries Australia submitted that the NPG is 'unable to satisfy demand from regional galleries' and its 'resourcing has been reduced to such an extent that it is harming [the Gallery's] capacity to deliver core programs, far less fulfil [its] national remit'.²⁰⁶ Moreover, concern was raised that some institutions are either no longer able or willing to conduct outreach such as travelling exhibitions without external funding.²⁰⁷

Committee comment

- 3.95 It is evident to the Committee that Canberra's national institutions are deeply committed to sharing their offerings with the public, and to exploring new and enhanced ways to engage with their audiences. The Committee strongly supports these efforts. At the same time, the Committee believes that improvements could be made to strengthen public engagement by the national institutions.
- 3.96 The Committee also recognises that many of the institutions are balancing the need to strengthen and evolve their public engagement against a number of competing pressures, in an environment of constrained resources. Resourcing of Canberra's national institutions is discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 8.

203 Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc., *Submission 13*, p. 8.

204 Cultural Facilities Corporation, *Submission 48*, p. 3.

205 For example: CPSU, *Submission 12*, p. 2; and Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, ACT Government, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 22 June 2018, p. 8.

206 Museums Galleries Australia, *Submission 39*, p. 8.

207 For example: CPSU, *Submission 12*, p. 17; and Meredith Hinchliffe, Carolyn Forster OAM and Sandy Forbes, *Submission 56*, p. 3.

Marketing Canberra's national institutions

- 3.97 The Australian public now enjoys unprecedented choices in the activities and experiences available to them. As such, the Committee believes that it is imperative for Canberra's national institutions to develop stronger branding and marketing strategies.
- 3.98 While many national institutions enjoy a high level of public trust and confidence, and some benefit from a central location and iconic buildings, the Committee endorses the recognition by all institutions that they can not be complacent about continued public interest. The Committee also exhorts national institutions to recognise that while budget constraints may affect their reputation and brand strength, governance issues and poor decisions also have an impact.²⁰⁸ The Committee is encouraged by evidence that many institutions are focusing on new and stronger promotion such as major exhibitions and innovative events, and enhancing their presence on the internet and social media.
- 3.99 Monitoring visitor information is crucial. While the Committee welcomes the fact that visitor numbers to many institutions are increasing, it is concerned by evidence suggesting that some national institutions may not be collecting and analysing enough data on their visitors to ensure that their offerings are appropriate, targeted and promote growth. In the Committee's view, it is imperative that all national institutions collect and evaluate timely and disaggregated visitor data to inform their marketing and activities.
- 3.100 One area where the Committee sees potential for significant growth is collective branding and marketing by Canberra's national institutions. The Committee welcomes evidence that this is already occurring to some extent, through forums such as *VisitCanberra* and the NCETP. However, the Committee is keen to see collective marketing continue to grow and to incorporate more national institutions. Major events and exhibitions occurring during the same season can provide a strong platform for such promotions, if institutions collaborate to maximise publicity around them and use them as a springboard for cross-promotion and for raising awareness of the core offerings of all the institutions.
- 3.101 The Committee believes that the national institutions are best placed to determine whether stronger joint marketing can be achieved through the existing mechanisms, or whether a new forum is needed. Broader proposals for a more formal consolidated governance structure or

208 Sally White, 'NGA splashes on armchairs during budget cuts', 6 April 2018, The Sydney Morning Herald, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/act/nga-splashes-on-armchairs-during-budget-cuts-20180405-p4z7vs.html>, viewed 12 March 2019.

collaborative body for national institutions, and the purposes this might serve, are discussed in chapter 4. However, the Committee emphasises the principle that Canberra's national institutions have much more to gain from cooperation than from competition.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that Canberra's national institutions make a stronger concerted effort to undertake collective branding and marketing, including the use of joint campaigns capitalising on major events and exhibitions occurring during the same season. These initiatives should be organised through structured collaboration, and based on the best available visitor data.

Digital technologies

- 3.102 The use of digital technology is an increasingly important aspect of how Canberra's national institutions engage with their audiences, both to enhance their physical exhibitions, and to facilitate virtual interaction with their collections and offerings for audiences everywhere. The Committee is pleased to see that a number of national institutions have received accolades for their work in this space, and many have reported increased patronage through online gateways.
- 3.103 The Trove service managed by the NLA is a particularly impressive digital tool. The Committee was interested to learn about how Trove enables users not only to access the collection of the National Library and its partners, but also to actively contribute to the resource.
- 3.104 The Committee is of the view that, where a strong case exists for the utility of a particular digital resource or where the digital resource is generating revenue, such as Trove, the Australian Government should recognise its value on an ongoing basis, and consider how additional resources, including staff, could be allocated to further develop it.
- 3.105 The Committee notes the views it heard during the inquiry about the importance of 'keeping up' in the digital space, with changing audience expectations requiring constant innovation. The Committee also acknowledges the evidence it received about the potential exclusion of certain segments of the community from access to institutions' online or digital resources, such as remote and regional Australians, older people, Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities. The Committee encourages the national institutions to pay particular attention to

measures, whether within or in addition to the digital space, to ensure that such audiences are not left behind.

- 3.106 In addition, the Committee does not believe that digital programs can completely replace physical collections, and should not be considered a substitute for encouraging actual visits to national institutions.

Under-represented visitors

- 3.107 The Committee was interested in exploring where 'gaps' exist in the public engagement of Canberra's national institutions, and emphasises the importance of ensuring that the story of Australia collectively told by the national institutions reaches all Australians. The Committee notes that national institutions identified young adults, Indigenous Australians and migrant and multicultural communities as key audiences to whom more outreach was needed.
- 3.108 The Committee took note that a crucial element in attracting diverse visitors was ensuring the inclusivity of the institutions' offerings. The Committee welcomed positive examples of institutions working directly with communities to this end, such as the NMA's successful *Songlines* exhibition.
- 3.109 The Committee encourages national institutions to engage with relevant Australian Government agencies to seek support for initiatives targeting these audiences. In particular, the Committee welcomes evidence provided by DSS that linking with its settlement services may provide a means for national institutions to connect with new migrants, and recommends that the Department and the institutions pursue such collaboration.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services and in conjunction with Canberra's national institutions, develop a program that encourages new migrants to Australia to visit Canberra's national institutions.

- 3.110 The Committee also welcomed hearing about special access programs offered by some institutions to engage with community members who require additional support to access the national collections, such as people with disability, people with dementia and the very young. In the Committee's view, such programs are important and worthy of continued

support, particularly where they have broader benefits for the health and well-being of participants.

Schools

- 3.111 The Committee notes the great significance of schools and education programs to the work of many of Canberra's national institutions. The Committee believes that school visits to Canberra are extremely worthwhile, and can even have a transformative effect in bringing history, society, civics, politics, science and the arts alive for Australian students. Importantly, the Committee considers that these excursions can promote an enduring interest in government, politics and policy, and lifelong engagement in the democratic processes that shape Australian society.
- 3.112 The Committee is very concerned about the significant waiting list of schools that wish to access programs conducted by national institutions in Canberra. It is alarming to learn that some national institutions have waiting lists that stretch for years, and that some may lack the resources and trained staff to conduct educational programs to meet this demand. While resourcing is considered later in this report, the Committee believes that it is imperative upon the Australian Government, working in cooperation with the national institutions, to ensure that all Australian school students have access to the education programs conducted in Canberra if desired. The ACT Government should also monitor the availability of suitable accommodation to ensure that it is sufficient to cater for the increasing demand for school visits to Canberra's national institutions. The Committee makes the observation that there may be opportunities for visiting schools to avail themselves of underutilised athlete accommodation at the Australian Institute of Sport campus.
- 3.113 The PACER program is one of the key conduits between schools across Australia and the education programs conducted by Canberra's national institutions. The program facilitates almost 100 000 student visits to Canberra each year, which is excellent. But it is clear that PACER subsidies support visits by many more students from NSW, Victoria and southern Queensland than those based further away, particularly in remote and regional communities.
- 3.114 The Committee believes more action must be taken to redress this imbalance, to ensure that the unique educational outcomes offered by Canberra's national institutions are accessible to Australian students on a more equitable basis. Several measures that would strengthen the PACER program were proposed to the Committee, including lifting the level of the rebate to account for growth in travel costs, increasing subsidies for schools that have further to travel, building in consideration of schools

with particular challenges and students with special needs, and additional resourcing for national institutions to address the strong demand for school programs. Bearing in mind these and other suggestions made to the inquiry, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake a comprehensive review of the PACER program.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake a comprehensive review of the PACER program, to include consideration of:

- **ways to increase capacity to enable participation by all interested schools and students;**
- **criteria for prioritising applications and funding support;**
- **the funding level provided to the program overall and for each student; and**
- **governance of the program including membership of its education advisory committee.**

3.115 It is also clear that there is a growing interest in the STEM education initiatives presented by Canberra's national institutions. In the Committee's view, there is a need for the development of incentives to promote the inbound science education market, that are distinct from the support for citizenship and civics programs supported by PACER. The Committee notes that the existing PACER program does not incentivise visiting students to undertake programs at the science-related national institutions, such as Questacon and the CSIRO Discovery Centre. The Committee believes that there is merit in the Australian Government developing a parallel scheme that incentivises school students to visit science-focussed national institutions, but that is distinct from the PACER initiative, to allow maximum flexibility for schools planning to visit the national capital.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with Canberra's science-focussed national institutions, develop a program to encourage and promote engagement in science education by school students visiting Canberra.

- 3.116 The Committee is encouraged by the digital classroom initiatives being developed by a number of national institutions. The Committee considers that these types of virtual programs can provide school groups in regional and remote locations with high-quality opportunities to learn about Canberra's national institutions, especially in circumstances where a physical visit is not possible. The Committee believes, however, that such programs should ideally supplement rather than replace physical visits to Canberra, and the Committee understands that it is possible that demand for visits to Canberra may in fact increase as a result. The Committee views this as a positive and – consistent with the recommendations above – encourages the Australian Government to consider how a future increase in demand might be appropriately resourced.
- 3.117 Finally, the Committee draws attention to an observation raised during the inquiry, that national institutions could do more to engage Senators and Members of the House of Representatives in the promotion of the Canberra-based, touring and online programs and resources offered by the institutions, to schools within their states, territories or electorates. The Committee is confident that Members and Senators would welcome targeted information from the national institutions to share with their local schools and communities.

Civics and democracy

- 3.118 One of the most positive aspects of the Committee's inquiry was hearing that Australians have a genuine interest in being informed about their democracy and democratic institutions. The key national institutions that facilitate engagement with civics and democracy are Parliament House, particularly its visitor services and Parliamentary Education Office (PEO); and MoAD and the NEEC at Old Parliament House. The Committee was particularly impressed by the electoral education program provided by NEEC, which generates both understanding of and enthusiasm for the people's role in democracy through the electoral process.
- 3.119 In the Committee's view there is a case for improved coordination between these institutions, to ensure that they are presenting a shared and consistent vision about Australian democracy, and to provide a clear

delineation of the programs and activities conducted by each, so that roles and functions are not duplicated. To achieve this, the Australian Government may wish to determine whether a closer administrative and operational alignment for these institutions, such as bringing them together under the auspices of the Parliamentary Presiding Officers, is required.

- 3.120 The Committee observes that such a model might also deliver much-needed efficiencies if the management and operations of Parliament House and Old Parliament House were integrated. Moreover, the Committee understands that Parliament House is presently facing space constraints and rents commercial space elsewhere for some of its operations. Integration may provide an opportunity to utilise space in Old Parliament House as a working extension of Parliament House, possibly in relation to educational, support and visitor services.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government review the objectives, roles and functions of the Museum of Australian Democracy, the National Electoral Education Centre and the visitor and education services at Parliament House; and consider the merits of their closer administrative and operational alignment.

- 3.121 The Committee identified that the NEEC and PEO in particular play a key role in providing electoral and parliamentary education programs to school students. However, due to facilities and capacity limitations, neither of these is able to extend their programs to the general public in a significant way. The Committee believes that the programs offered by NEEC and PEO about our electoral and parliamentary systems, respectively, could have great value in inspiring, engaging and empowering participation in democracy by adult visitors as well as school students. This would ideally include the expansion of NEEC at Old Parliament House to offer further full, pre-booked programs and a new 'walk-up' electoral education experience for impromptu visitors.
- 3.122 The Committee recognises that both the PEO and NEEC would need expanded facilities and staffing to make this possible, particularly given the evidence received that they are already unable to meet the high demand from school groups. Nevertheless, the Committee believes that such an investment by the Government would be a worthwhile one, to enhance both the democratic engagement of citizens and the strategic

value of two of Canberra's key national institutions.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider expanding the facilities and resourcing of the Parliamentary Education Office and the National Electoral Education Centre, to allow them to offer regular programs to public visitors as well as school groups, and the NEEC to also offer a walk-up experience for impromptu visitors.

3.123 The Committee's visit to MoAD during the inquiry provided an opportunity to see firsthand the Museum's current exhibitions and to speak with staff about its activities. The Committee has some concern that there may be a disconnect between MoAD's fundamental strategic role, and some of the directions it is now taking in its engagement with the public. The legislation establishing Old Parliament House sets out its functions as:

- (a) to conserve, develop and present the Old Parliament House building and collections;
- (b) to provide public programs and research activities related to Australia's social and parliamentary history; and
- (c) to provide a range of other services for visitors to Old Parliament House;

along with undertaking other relevant tasks conferred on it by law or by the Arts Minister from time to time.²⁰⁹

3.124 MoAD itself describes its principal role as being: 'to tell the story of Australia's remarkable democratic heritage, including conserving and presenting Old Parliament House as a pre-eminent element of that heritage'.²¹⁰

3.125 The Committee is of the view that MoAD should focus on developing visitors' understanding of the nation's democratic history, and inspiring their faith in our democracy. Importantly, MoAD should encourage and empower visitors in a positive way about their agency in Australia's political system, rather than focusing on critical debates and discourse about democracy that may be best left to academic, think tank or media analysis. 2019 marks ten years since MoAD was established, and the

209 Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Establishing Old Parliament House) Rule 2016 [F2016L00739], section 9.

210 Museum of Australian Democracy, *Statement of Intent 2018-19*, <https://www.moadoph.gov.au/about/corporate-documents/>, viewed 19 March 2019.

Committee considers that it would be timely to undertake an assessment of whether it is appropriately focused on and effective in achieving its core role and responsibilities.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government examine the present objectives and activities of the Museum of Australian Democracy, with a view to ensuring that the Museum is appropriately focused on its core responsibilities: to tell the story of Australia's remarkable democratic heritage, and inspire citizens' engagement in democracy.

- 3.126 A final observation relating to the issue of civics and democracy, is the Committee's view that there is a need for enhanced understanding of and engagement with Australia's political party system. Our political parties have played an essential role in the strength and stability of our democracy. Our democracy can be further strengthened through active engagement in our democratically governed and member-owned and operated political parties, particularly given the rise of activist political companies that have no broad membership-based ownership or governance structures.
- 3.127 Australia's political parties have significant archives of material and records from both campaigns and policy development that have formed an important part of our country's democratic history. The Committee considers that this material should be placed on the public record, preserved and presented as part of our national story. A more detailed history and presentation of each of Australia's political parties would, in the Committee's view, form a relevant and valuable addition to the collection and exhibitions of MoAD. In the Committee's assessment, political parties do not have the resources to independently and comprehensively undertake this task, meaning that assistance from the Australian Government would be required.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with political parties to create centres for each political party, located at MoAD, to collect, preserve, research and make available publications and exhibitions on the parties' history, campaigns, policies and achievements.

Public outreach beyond Canberra

- 3.128 Outreach programs conducted by Canberra's national institutions are an important tool to reach new audiences around Australia and internationally. These include online platforms, as noted above, but also travelling exhibitions, loans of collection items to other institutions, and partnering with communities to conduct events. A few national institutions have permanent offices outside Canberra to allow community members to access collection materials, although the Committee is disappointed to learn that some of these activities are being scaled back.
- 3.129 The Committee is also concerned to learn that some national institutions have reduced or ended outreach programs as a result of resource constraints. While resource issues will be discussed later in this report, it is not acceptable that fewer resources available to national institutions result in denying communities in regional, rural and remote Australia access to elements of Australia's history, culture and records that are held in Canberra. In considering the value of outreach programs, particularly where there are risks of programs being reduced or eliminated, the Committee urges Canberra's national institutions to explore all avenues, including sourcing external funding and building partnerships, to maintain links to communities around Australia.