

July 17, 2008

Submission Re: Inquiry into the effects of the ongoing efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Australian Map Circle (AMC), regarding the proposed 2% additional efficiency dividend to be levied on the National Library of Australia. A copy of this letter will be provided to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, for submission to the Inquiry into the effects of the ongoing efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies.

The AMC is a national group of map producers, users, researchers, collectors, and curators which acts as a medium of communication for all those interested in maps. The organisation was founded as the Australian Map Curators' Circle in 1973. Its mission is to promote communication between producers and users of maps, and the development and access to map collections throughout Australia. The AMC produces a journal, *The Globe*, and further promotes study and research through its annual conference.

The AMC has a long and productive relationship with the National Library, including regular co-convening of its conference. In 2007 the AMC again held its conference in Canberra, with the valued support and involvement of the Library. The event was well attended by researchers and visitors both national and international, and was a focal point for the maps community, many of whom are regular users of the Library's Maps and other special materials collections. In addition to its fine collection of charts and maps pertaining to the early mapping and settlement of Australia, the National Library's collection includes uniquely comprehensive holdings of Australian aerial photographs, and many geological, topographic and cadastral map series which are in many cases the only source of essential information for family historians, land owners and managers, students, environmentalists, planners and many other users.

The Library has an equally impressive record of managing and making its materials available both in its reading rooms and online through its digitisation programs. Such achievements are no accident, but require the dedication and effective contributions of curators and other staff. Within heritage and research organisations such as the Library, a great deal of expertise is accumulated and concentrated in a relatively few individuals. I am aware that the Library has been subject to an efficiency dividend over the past decade, and although it is to be expected that a further 2% forecast in the 2008/9 budget will obtain savings across the Department, we believe the added burden on the Library has the potential for serious effects on what is an exemplary service-oriented organisation.

The ongoing development and effective management of this national collection is of particular interest to the AMC, for the contribution to research outcomes that can be derived. If as may be anticipated there are reductions in staff numbers as a result of a further efficiency dividend, and opening hours, retrieval and delivery of library materials, reference services, digitisation and other programs suffer as a result, this will do ours and other research communities a considerable

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disservice. Seemingly minor reductions in access to these materials or curtailment of collaborative arrangements may have disproportionate impact on the ability of the Library to provide service to our members and other research communities.

While efficiency dividends may have a place in large agencies, they assume resource and capacity above an acceptable baseline level. Small agencies such as the National Library of Australia currently operate at the baseline level, consequently measures such as the additional efficiency dividend remove the capacity to innovate, to collaborate, to maintain the core collection, to maintain existing services and to perform the core functions.

On behalf of the AMC, its Executive and membership, I therefore request that the National Library of Australia be excluded from the efficiency dividend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Ross", written over a horizontal line.

Mr Michael Ross
President, Australian Map Circle

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