

Mr R. Chafer
Secretary
Joint Public Accounts and Audit Committee
Parliament House
Canberra.
ACT 2600

14th July, 2008.

Dear Mr Chafer

Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry into the effects of the ongoing efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies.

Viclink is the peak body which represents the public library profession in Victoria. Viclink has prepared this submission to the inquiry to offer its support to the National Library Australia (NLA) which is an agency affected by the efficiency dividend.

Viclink regards the National Library of Australia as a vital public agency and agrees fully with the view put forward by Hume Libraries that any funding cuts as a result the efficiency dividend will have a negative impact on the NLA's ability to provide core services to the Australian public library sector.

One of the core services provided by the NLA is to generate a centralized database of catalogue records for all items published in, or about, Australia and all other items acquired by public libraries. This service is provided through Libraries Australia (an arm of NLA) and it is a vital component to the ongoing provision of authoritative information to Australian communities. These digital records assist public libraries to catalogue their collections at a reasonable cost and ensure in making those collections readily available to all Australians. It is important to note in this regard, that public libraries pay a fee for this service and also, in some instances, upload their catalogue records to the Libraries Australia database, thus contributing to the accessibility for the Australia community. Any reduction in this core service would have an enormous detrimental impact on a universally accessible service for all Australians.

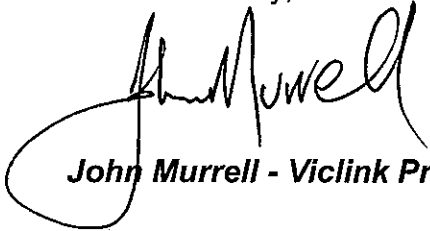
The NLA is heavily relied upon both locally and nationally in terms of digital preservation and access to cultural collections. As part of the service, the Inter-Library loans and document delivery transactions have substantially increased public accessibility to library collections across Victoria and Australia.

The NLA is also an essential part of Australia's national information infrastructure enabling libraries to operate efficiently by supporting resource sharing, cooperative collection development, cataloguing and reference.

The NLA provides valued leadership and support to library professionals and acts as an important conduit in sharing information both nationally and internationally.

When undertaking its review, Viclink recommends that the Committee considers the benefits of the NLA's core services which enable public libraries to provide high quality, accessible and equitable services to all Australians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Murrell', with a large, stylized loop at the end of the signature.

John Murrell - Viclink President