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Sent: Thursday, 3 July 2008 5:31 PM

To: Committee, JCPAA (REPS)

Cc: Mieke Mellars; George Osborne; Emma Wilkinson

Subject: Hume Libraries' submission to the Parliamentary Joint Inquiry on the efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies
3 July 2008

The Secretary of the Committee
02 6277 4615
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To the Secretary of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit:

Re: Inquiry into the effects of the ongoing efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies – National Library of Australia

Hume Libraries supports and is supported by the work of the National Library of Australia. We believe that any funding cuts as a result of the efficiency dividend will have a negative impact on the NLA's ability to provide core services, they will hamper innovation and invention, and they could cause the NLA to lose its standing internationally.

In terms of core services, the NLA's Libraries Australia service is used by every single public, academic, medical, corporate, legal, and school library in Australia. This service provides the digital records required by every library to catalogue their collections and make them available to their customers. Libraries rely heavily on this service for processing the millions of items that are added to our collections each year, and for facilitating millions of inter library loan and document delivery transactions. Any cuts in service will have an immediate and negative impact on the availability of information nationwide.

With regard to innovation, the NLA is a leader in the use of digital preservation and access to cultural collections. It's PictureAustralia, MusicAustralia, Pandora, Australia Dancing, and Australian Research Online services facilitate collection, preservation and access to the cultural history of our nation. These services and the databases associated with them provide long-term repositories for Australian history and culture. These websites showcase Australia on the world-stage; any researcher around the world can look to these sources for authoritative and accurate information on Australian life. Without funding these services will lose their dynamic appeal and become merely static archives.

The NLA is a showcase for the nation in other ways. Its local exhibitions in Canberra, traveling exhibitions across the nation and online exhibitions are aimed at sharing the cultural wealth of our nation with the general public and at educating them on Australia's history, art, and culture. The NLA building in Canberra is the physical repository for millions of books and manuscripts that are unique to Australia. It provides a centralized location for original source material which is used by historians, biographers, genealogists, and other researchers. In order to continue this work the Library needs to be fully funded so it can acquire new materials and develop new exhibitions.

Finally, the NLA provides leadership and support to library professionals through lectures, professional development programs, and research committees. The NLA is currently taking a leadership role within the

Australian library community to disseminate information and answer questions around RDA: Resource Description and Access. This is a new cataloguing standard which will be released in 2009 and which has the potential to fundamentally change the way that information is catalogued and accessed by everyone around the world. It allows for much greater integration of web-based information resources, and it is vital that our libraries (and librarians) have a solid grasp of how it works. The NLA, working with the Australian Library and Information Association is playing a key role in educating our profession. This work must continue to maintain Australia's ability to share information world-wide.

In conclusion, Hume Libraries offers its full support for the work of the National Library of Australia, and does not support any cuts in funding to this vital public agency. We hope that you will consider all of the positive ways that the National Library supports the nation and rethink the benefit of the efficiency dividend.

Sincerely,

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