



## SENATOR THE HON ROD KEMP

*Minister for the Arts and Sport*

Ms Catherine Robinson  
President  
Australian Society of Archivists Inc.  
PO Box 77  
DICKSON ACT 2602

7 DEC 2005

*Tabled by the  
Minister  
31/10/06  
Supp. Estimates*

Dear Ms Robinson

Thank you for your letter of 26 October 2005 regarding the Australian Society of Archivists' resolution on the National Film and Sound Archive.

I note the five resolutions that were recently adopted at the Society's Annual General Meeting. The Government remains committed to the successful integration of the Archive, with a strong identity of its own, within the Australian Film Commission. The Government believes that this is the most appropriate way to ensure the long term promotion and preservation of Australia's screen culture.

Since the integration in 2003, many significant achievements have been realised including the appointment of an internationally renowned archivist, Dr Paolo Cherchi Usai, as the Director of the Archive—the first time a professional archivist has held the position since the establishment of the Archive in 1984. Dr Cherchi Usai subsequently released his vision for the future of the Archive, which I understand has been supported by stakeholders and staff. Other achievements include: changing the name back to the National Film and Sound Archive; establishment of an Advisory Committee consisting of a wide range of stakeholders; *The Sentimental Bloke* restoration project and screenings; the National Film and Video Lending Collection being delivered since July 2004 via the Archive from Canberra; and the establishment of an Indigenous Unit.

I understand that a number of other projects are underway including the National Discography, the National Filmography and the National Videography.

The Government acknowledges the important role that the Archive plays in being the custodian of Australia's audio-visual collection and the importance of access to the collection. With this in mind, additional funding of \$6.9 million over three years is being provided to the integrated organisation for screen culture activities with some of this funding being used to enable increased access to the Archive by educational providers.

Thank you for bringing the Society's concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

ROD KEMP



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Senator the Honourable Rod Kemp  
Minister for the Arts  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Kemp

### **Resolution on the National Film and Sound Archive**

At the recent national conference of the Australian Society of Archivists, a resolution was adopted unanimously at the Society's Annual General Meeting. A copy of the resolution appears below.

#### **Background**

In February 2004 the Society lodged a public submission with the Australian Film Commission in response to its *Stage 2 Directions* paper on the "integration" of the National Film and Sound Archive with the AFC. It also participated in the "stakeholder forums" organised by the AFC, transcripts of which were posted on the AFC website. Inter alia, the Society urged the establishment of a legislative mandate for the Archive, and the protection of its independence, autonomy and identity.

In July 2004, the ACT Branch of the Association co-hosted a conference in Canberra on the "Future of the Archive", the recommendations and resolutions of which were promptly communicated to the AFC. These included a call to formally withdraw the *Directions* paper, since it had become an impediment to constructive discussion, and a call for the Archive to be established as a statutory authority separate from the AFC. The conference applauded the appointment of Dr Paolo Cherchi Usai as the new Director of the Archive.

Neither of these inputs has yet received any response from the AFC.

At last year's Annual General Meeting, the Society passed a resolution on the National Film and Sound Archive, and subsequently included it in a press release issued on 20 September.

The resolution was sent to the Minister for the Arts and Sport (Senator the Honourable Rod Kemp) and the Minister for Communications and Information Technology (the Honourable Helen Coonan). Neither Minister acknowledged receipt or responded to the resolution. It was also sent to Senator Kate Lundy, then Shadow Minister for the Arts.

Demands by Senator Lundy's successor as Shadow Arts Minister, Senator Kim Carr, for a satisfactory answer to the ASA resolution to be tabled in Senate Estimates Committee have so far not been met.



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Throughout this time there has been mounting evidence that the AFC has been proceeding regardless with its *Directions* proposals, and progressively diminishing the identity and autonomy of the Archive.

#### Resolution

- 1 The Australian Society of Archivists calls on the Minister for the Arts and Sport (Senator the Honourable Rod Kemp) to respond to the resolution from the 2004 annual general meeting, sent to him on 20 September 2004.
- 2 It supports the call by Senator Kim Carr for a full response to this resolution to be tabled at the relevant Senate Estimates Committee.
- 3 It congratulates the Minister for the Arts and Sport on the reinstatement of the Archive's original name, and calls on him to honour the Government's promise that the Archive's identity would be kept separate from, and not subordinated to, the identity of the Australian Film Commission.
- 4 It calls on the Minister for the Arts and Sport to declare the definitive withdrawal of the Australian Film Commission's *Directions* plan.
- 5 It endorses the widely expressed view that the National Film and Sound Archive should be established as a statutory authority separate from the Australian Film Commission, and asks the Minister for the Arts and Sport to take prompt action to achieve this.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Robinson  
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Australian Society of Archivists  
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26 October 2005



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#### **Resolution passed at the 2004 AGM**

- 1 The ASA calls on the AFC Board to immediately provide a comprehensive public response to:
  - the ASA's February submission in reply to the "Directions" paper
  - all the input gathered during the January/February "stakeholder forums"
  - the recommendations and resolutions of the July conference on "The Future of the Archive"
- 2 It calls on the AFC Board to explain its non-communication with stakeholders over the last several months, while still proceeding to implement "Directions" proposals and reduce the autonomy and identity of the Archive.
- 3 It calls on the incoming government to move quickly to establish the National Film and Sound Archive as a statutory authority separate from the AFC
- 4 It welcomes the arrival of Dr Paolo Cherchi Usai as the new Director of the Archive.