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Senate Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy

30 September 2019

GLAM Peak represents the peak bodies of the galleries, libraries, archives, museums, historical societies and other research collections. Members support the nation's arts, heritage, education, science and humanities research, and innovation priorities.

GLAM Peak members include:

- Australian Academy of the Humanities
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Australian Library and Information Association
- Australian Society of Archivists
- Council of Australasian Archive and Records Authorities
- Council of Australasian Museum Directors
- Federation of Australian Historical Societies
- International Council of Museums, Australia
- Australian Museums and Galleries Association
- National Archives of Australia
- National Film and Sound Archive
- National Library of Australia
- National and State Libraries Australia
- University Art Museums Australia

As the principal repositories of Australia's unique history, art, heritage and audio-visual collections, GLAM organisations have a central role in connecting Australians with the stories and histories of their communities at a local regional and national level. They are trusted spaces and foster understandings of identity, nationhood and citizenship.

This sector is both a resource for innovation and creativity, and a basis for learning and knowledge production on many levels. GLAM Peak seeks to improve public access to, and use of, cultural collections, with a special focus on digital collections, from creation to preservation.

Providing digital access is the most effective way of ensuring Australian arts, scientific collections, and heritage, in all its many forms, can be discovered and enjoyed by audiences in Australia (both in cities and in the regions and remote areas) and worldwide. There are many stories about the positive impact digital access has had on the lives of individuals and there are a number of examples of how digital access has led to important scientific and policy outcomes.

We continue to advocate for:

- The adoption of national, state, territory and local government digital access to collections strategies,
- Dedicated funding for digitisation and digital access at every level, and
- Initiatives to help build the capacity of smaller and regional cultural institutions.

Strengthening the sector in this way will strengthen the capacity for informed debate about our democracy and decisions about the future.



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GLAM Peak also seeks to strengthen the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Australia's galleries, libraries, archives and museums through developing a culturally competent workforce; increasing Indigenous employment, engagement and participation; and ensuring culturally appropriate management of Indigenous collections. This will enhance social inclusion as well as deepen all Australians' reflective understanding of our history.

The GLAM sector currently collaborates with the research sector in multiple ways to enable researchers to discover, access, curate and analyse social and cultural data. This is vital work for a robust and informed nation.

GLAM Peak is therefore committed to driving improvements in the way in which researchers across the disciplines access and interact with Australia's cultural collections. We work with and advocate to government about the requirements for platforms that can operate across the research and cultural sectors to support data-driven innovation, training to build research capabilities, and tools that facilitate collaboration across different platforms.

GLAM Peak endorses the more detailed submissions from member organisations, such as AMaGA, ALIA and the AAH, and recommends that the sector is both recognised for its contributions to knowledge development and an engaged citizenry, and is better supported to address the challenges to democracy that are outlined in the Inquiry's Discussion Paper.

Dr Robin Hirst PSM and Ms Liz Jack OLY
Co-Conveners of GLAM Peak

Social inclusion and unlocking information in collections: Case Studies from GLAM Peak workshops with small, regional and remote cultural organisations (2017):

"The grant will go into solid state drives for archival storage of digitised files. Beyond the job of digitising metres of shelved reports, studies, old journals, and images we are developing new working relationships with local indigenous groups as we discover materials relevant to them, and with students of Newcastle University. The GLAM workshops took us into new realms and we love it."

"Overall the workshop has changed the attitude of our volunteers and encouraged understanding of what we are trying to achieve. *The workshop strengthened our belief that what we were doing was worthwhile*, and also showed us the range of experience in the other groups participating. In particular, some of our volunteers who are in the 70+ age bracket have realised that computers are not beyond their capacity to use and learn. The training materials have been an excellent way to record the provenance and significance of objects. Thus *it is an insurance that the story behind an object will not be lost with the passing of current staff.*"

"We have attracted six new volunteers to the project. It grabbed their intellect and sense of being part of something worthy that used their skills beyond the humdrum. We have learned far more in a few short weeks since the workshops and are developing a productive work flow, most importantly in an atmosphere of "this is good we enjoy this".

GLAM Peak website <http://www.digitalcollections.org.au/>