

Some comments on the AFC/SSA Review of Current Programs_Stage One Internal Discussion Paper

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Thankyou for the opportunity to provide comments on the AFC/SSA Discussion Paper. I have kept my remarks very brief and limited them to a few issues due to time limitations and probably haven't done them much justice. I'd be happy to expand on these at the upcoming meeting of the Indigenous Reference Group.

Introduction

- While the changes are probably inevitable, I would not like to see SSA lose very much, if any, of the autonomy it may have had prior to the integration.
- Comparisons between international archives and SSA need to be tempered by whether or not the international institutions and their practices are successful or the right model in an Australian context. We need to be careful not to reinvent a cultural cringe mentality.

Achievements to date

- I feel that the staff of SSA have produced an immense degree of success as well as commitment and dedication to their work and this needs to be made explicit.

Key Themes

- I agree that the name should revert to the National Film and Sound Archive.
- I notion of collecting international material that has influenced Australian film and sound is excellent.
- While I acknowledge the benefits of having curators working in specific areas of expertise, one of the benefits of strategically-placed generalists is that they have the ability to work across media and disciplines, making each relevant to the other, and making linkages that others don't make.
- Strongly agree with developing a more scholarly approach within SSA.
- I would like to have seen a more fulsome appraisal of Indigenous issues as they relate to SSA in the discussion paper. I'm not sure what is being inferred by the sentence beginning "The level of representation..." at 2.8.
- There seems to be some implied criticism of the Indigenous Reference Group or its usefulness by the reference to it not having met for 12 months. There are reasons for this both logistical and as I understand it, financial. It has been an extremely effective group and I think a

model for other institutions. SSA should be congratulated on taking the initiative in the first place.

- Dealing with Indigenous material will be one of the major challenges both philosophically and in practical terms over the next decade. Already SSA must be seen as one of the leaders in dealing with this material and grappling with the associated issues and it needs to stay ahead on this.
- I think though that membership of the IRG could be reviewed from time to time but I wouldn't make any major changes. Keep them incremental as too much change and instability is not a good message to send out to the Indigenous community.
- Almost the central issue dealt with by the IRG is moral rights and intellectual property rights of Indigenous people. The discussion paper mentions only copyright and digital rights. It is this very fundamental type of approach which makes maintenance of the IRG crucial to SSA.
- Product development is, apart from revenue raising, another form of access. It is making the collection more accessible to a public that may not have the same professional/research bent of other users. To take this narrow view of who access should be provided to, and how, is a mistake.
- Developing scholarships and research fellowships is an excellent strategy.