



Monday 5 September 2022

Mr Ian Keese  
Acting President  
Independent Scholars Association of Australia  
C/o – [info@isaa.org.au](mailto:info@isaa.org.au)

Dear Mr Keese,

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 July, regarding the ABC's archives and internal organisational changes.

The ABC's archives are unquestionably a nationally significant resource to be handled with great care, and it has been a priority of the ABC to preserve, protect, and improve access to them, for the benefit of the Australian public both present and future.

A major element of that is digitisation. Several years ago, the ABC invested significantly in a large-scale project to ensure the ABC's highly valuable and sometimes fragile content is preserved for future generations, and to improve accessibility. The project has already required a substantial allocation of resources and time, but it is essential for the ABC's progression into a digital-first media organisation. By the end of this year, we expect that 1.2 million documents, 637,000 images, 97,000 videotapes and 54,000 audio carriers will have been digitised.

The ABC understands that the successful digitisation of archives of this size is only possible because of the groundwork of skilled archivists and librarians who have protected, and maintained access to, ABC content over decades. The ABC acknowledges the significance of that contribution and expertise, and its importance for the future.

Many programs our audiences have valued over the years have relied on the archives and those who manage it. In future, readily available access to those archives is likely to be of even greater importance for our journalists and program makers as they produce programs our audiences enjoy and trust. As part of this, the ABC is obliged to ensure the organisation adapts so as to allow it to operate effectively into the future, maintain its connection to the Australian public, and continue to fulfil its Charter. The proposed changes are designed to ensure the

ABC Archives will be prepared for continuing technology change, such as new and emerging digital platforms.

Under the archives proposal, the ABC's archives and library services will have a staffing level of around 70 people. Archives staff will continue to be based in newsrooms to assist and support our content teams, and they will remain responsible for the archiving of raw material. Any work done by journalists to assist in archiving material will be minimal.

I am confident that under the proposal the ABC will continue to protect and grow its archives, while improving access to allow content to be unearthed and reused for the benefit of the Australian public.

The proposal has continued to evolve over the last few months as we have reviewed internal and external feedback. At this point, it does include changes to roles and the overall number with a net reduction of 24 roles.

Clearly this is a difficult time for all affected employees. A consultation process is underway and the ABC will offer care and support to those colleagues in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me on these very sensitive and important issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

David Anderson  
Managing Director