



21 June 2022

Mr David Anderson, Managing Director, ABC  
Ms Ita Buttrose, AC OBE, Chair, ABC  
Hon Michelle Rowland, MP, Minister for Communications  
Hon Tony Burke, MP, Minister for the Arts

### **Statement of concern: ABC Archives restructure**

The four state History Councils (New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia) wish to join with many other like-organisations and members of the wider public in expressing our concern about the announced decision of the ABC to terminate 58 positions of ABC librarians and archivists.

The History Councils are the peak bodies for history in these states, with the shared objective of furthering historical literacy and awareness and inspiring public engagement with the past, their identity and the world today. The councils include representatives from cultural and educational institutions and heritage bodies; history teachers and curriculum advisors; academic and professional historians; and local, Indigenous, community and specialist history organisations. Our Value of History Statement may be consulted at: [https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/value\\_of\\_history](https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/value_of_history)

While recent developments in the digitisation of ABC records are to be applauded, the corollary that journalists are now able to access and maintain these records seems illogical and flies in the face of experience of other organisations which have followed this path. It assumes that journalists will have the necessary skills to locate all relevant records for investigative stories and that the extraordinary richness and complexity of online resources will remain uncompromised by non-professional tagging and maintenance. This is of major importance. Digitisation has led to fundamental changes in the nature and potential of record storage and accessibility, but it is the breadth and specification of the archivist's role that has changed rather than the role itself no longer being needed.

Underpinning our concern is the unparalleled value of ABC archives as an historical and cultural resource for all Australians and for all time. The role of the ABC and its archives has never been more important than now, in its 90<sup>th</sup> year. These records are of crucial importance not only for ABC staff but as a record and resource for all those who research, write and comment on Australian and world affairs.

The History Councils express the wish that you will reconsider this proposal and would be happy to be involved in a wider consultation process.



Respectfully submitted on behalf of the History Councils of Australia,

**Dr Stephen Gapps, President, History Council of NSW & Convenor, History Councils of Australia, and  
Emeritus Professor Peter McPhee, AM, Chair, History Council of Victoria**

Contact:

E: [executive@historycouncilnsw.org.au](mailto:executive@historycouncilnsw.org.au)

M: 0418 811 522 (HCNSW Office)

Further information about the individual History Councils of Australia can be found below:

History Council of New South Wales: <https://historycouncilnsw.org.au/>

History Council of Victoria: <https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/>

History Council of South Australia: <https://historycouncilsa.org.au/>

History Council of Western Australia: <https://www.historycouncilwa.org.au/>