



Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Country Liberals Senator for the Northern Territory

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THOUSANDS PROTEST CLOSURE OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES OFFICES

A petition presented to the House of Representatives last night carried the signatures of 5,748 Australians protesting the closure of the Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart offices of the National Archives of Australia.

Senator Nigel Scullion said the decision to close the offices contravened the legislation under which the NAA is administered, as well as its own Service Charter, which states that records will be made available in all capital cities in Australia.

“It is a little-known fact that in 2001, then Opposition Member for Griffith Kevin Rudd launched an FOI action against the Government, protesting against the proposed sale of the Cannon Hill repository of the National Archives in Queensland,” Senator Scullion said.

“As Prime Minister Rudd argued then, the economics of this decision are questionable, and I have serious concerns about how the consultation process was conducted, and how the decision to close the offices was made.

“These are areas which are already affected by the tyranny of distance, and closure of the Northern Territory office in particular will remove a culturally-sensitive service for Indigenous people, including members of the Stolen Generation.

“More often than not, these people are not comfortable picking up the phone to speak with a stranger in Canberra about their most intimate family history, so why would the Government even consider centralising such an important service?

“There are also serious consequences for local historians. I have spoken to several in my electorate that say their work would not have been possible if they had had to rely on a digital service.

“This will have an adverse effect on university post-graduate programs and ultimately will lead to the loss of invaluable local historical research.

“In light of the many objections raised by individuals from both sides of the political divide, I will strongly urge Special Minister of State Joe Ludwig to reconsider this decision.”

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