

## Submission

# 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Capability Issues Paper

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### Introduction

MA: Museums Galleries Australia welcomes the opportunity to respond to the National Research Infrastructure Capability Issues Paper. Conceptualizing and developing the next generation research capabilities is a significant undertaking for Australia. We advise that we have been in consultation with peak body colleagues in the broad Galleries, Archives, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) sector, and in particular have discussed issues and ideas with both the Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) and the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD).

### Key Response

**We therefore endorse the submission by the AAH regarding the broader policy issues as well as the Understanding Cultures and Communities Capability Focus Area. We also endorse the submission by CAMD regarding, as well as the above, the additional focus areas of biosecurity and environment and natural resource management.**

### Who we are

MA: Museums Galleries Australia is the national association and peak advocacy body representing museums and galleries. We encompass a wide and diverse range of national, state, regional and community museums, galleries, historic sites, botanic and zoological gardens, research centres, Indigenous cultural centres, and Keeping Places across Australia. All of our members are, however, linked by a shared dedication to culture, the arts, movable cultural heritage and communities, and the knowledge that Australian cultural life is a dynamic ecosystem that generates creativity and contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of the country. Attachment A provides a short profile of the organisation and a snapshot of the diverse range of member institutions.

MA is also a service and professional development organisation. We have branches in every state and territory, and support professional national networks of expertise. We seek to enhance the value of Australia's collections and stories by sharing knowledge, developing skills, inspiring innovation and providing leadership and the authoritative voice in protecting and promoting our arts and cultural heritage.

MA is the single national voice representing a diverse sector that reaches across the entire country and internationally. Not only do we stitch these interests together to deliver clear messages and outcomes, we reach out to the broader collections and cultural sector to work together.

### **The cultural sector**

The cultural sector is the parallel source of knowledge to the formal education system and museums and galleries are hugely trusted sources of information, learning and engagement for people of all ages. Furthermore, they help foster the creative industries which are one of the engine houses of the economy.

Museums and galleries are also places where Indigenous and settler Australians meet and learn about each other, and are key resources for achieving reconciliation. The research and social capital outcomes of drawing on the deep knowledge that is held will be invaluable.

### **GLAM Peak digital access to collections Initiative**

In 2015, MA initiated the first ever collaboration of GLAM Peak (galleries, museums, libraries and archives' peak bodies) that is focusing on an integrated approach to expanding Australia's digital access to collections and meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century's requirements for a knowledge economy. Year One of a project to develop a national framework and case-study based toolkit is currently underway.

This work will support and guide the development of the **supply-side** of digitising the data that are held in Australia's wildly disparate and dispersed collections. What is also essential is investment in the **user-side** – the powerful next-generation research infrastructure that can easily find, interrogate, compare and use this digital data in a myriad of ways to create new knowledge. Building this capability should be a key part Australia's next national Roadmap for infrastructure investment.