



ASAA Statement on National Library of Australia

Dear colleagues,

Many of you will have heard that the National Library of Australia has initiated a review of its collecting strategy, which might lead to a severe curtailment – or even cessation altogether – of collecting from Asian countries (excepting China and Indonesia, which the library has said will be quarantined). This is potentially a significant blow to Asian Studies in Australia.

At our AGM on 22 November 2019, the Association passed the following motion:

“The ASAA notes with concern reports that the National Library of Australia will be reviewing its collecting strategy, and may significantly reduce its collecting from Asian countries, except Indonesia and China. The ASAA notes that the Asian collections of the NLA – including on Japan, Korea and mainland Southeast Asia – are among the strongest in the world, having been built up over many decades of far-sighted and significant investment. These collections make the National Library of Australia a treasure of global Asian Studies, and are a major national asset. The ASAA welcomes the opportunity for the Association and Scholars of Asia to be involved in the review of the Asia collecting strategy. We call on the National Library of Australia to maintain a comprehensive Asia collecting strategy and appeal to the Federal Government to provide adequate funding to enable the Library to maintain the breadth, depth and integrity of its Asia collection.”

The AGM also decided that over the coming year that the ASAA will participate in the consultative processes that the NLA establishes around its review, and run a public campaign to highlight the importance of the Asia collections and call for greater funding for the NLA. We will establish a working group. If you would like to participate in this group, please send a note to asaa@anu.edu.au. We will convene in the new year.