

## **BUDGET THIN ON CONTENT FOR THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SECTOR**

**Canberra, Tuesday 3 May:** We found surprisingly little news in the Australian Government Budget 2016-2017 relating to library and information related issues but our Members will be interested in these items pulled from the hundreds of pages of Budget reports.

### **Digital Transformation**

Digital transformation was a thread that ran through every portfolio and was especially noticeable in the Health arena.

### **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

Despite the announcement in the May 2014 Budget that the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner would be disbanded later that year, the OAIC limped on and this year's Budget included \$8.1 million over four years to fund its continued operation.

### **Public Sector Transformation and the Efficiency Dividend**

The national cultural institutions' funding levels all showed the depressing and cumulative effect of the Efficiency Dividend. Further increases in the Australian Public Service Efficiency Dividend were announced for the next three years: an additional 1.5 per cent in 2017-18, 1 per cent in 2018-19 and 0.5 per cent in 2019-20.

### **Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies**

In the Education and Training portfolio, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) was the one cultural institution with something to celebrate - an additional \$40 million over four years from 2016-17 to support the preservation, restoration and management of the AIATSIS collection of cultural and heritage material, as well as investment in additional expertise and digitisation equipment. However, this funding commitment had already been partly announced (as \$20 million over two years) by the Prime Minister in his Closing the Gap statement of 10 February 2016.

### **Higher education**

As a professional body involved in higher education course accreditation, we were pleased to see the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency receive additional funding of \$2.5 million per annum from 1 July 2016.

### **School funding**

We can hope that school libraries will benefit, at least indirectly, from the additional \$1.2 billion promised for schools between 2018 and 2020.

### **Cyber Security**

Public and school libraries have been partners in the Government's Stay Smart Online campaign over a number of years. This will be replaced by a new cyber security awareness campaign with \$10 million in funding and we hope to continue libraries' involvement with the activity.

### **Support for Communities**

The Australian Government announced it would continue the Financial Assistance Grant program, providing approximately \$2.4 billion per year to local government for infrastructure, health, recreation, environment or employment projects. Public libraries may be able to benefit from this funding.

For more information, go to <http://www.budget.gov.au>.