

Film archive calls cut on staff and screenings

By Sally Pryor
Arts Editor



Twenty-eight staff positions will be cut at the National Film and Sound Archive and the regular screenings at Arc cinema will be a thing of the past, after a major restructure announced on Friday.

Chief executive Michael Loebenstein, pictured, said staff numbers would be reduced from 206 to 178, meaning the loss of 28 positions.

And the regular year-long program of films at the much-loved art deco cinema will be cut to occasional event screenings and public programs, while the archive looked to modernise its operations and move more into the online world.

Mr Loebenstein announced the restructure at an all-staff meeting on Friday, the result of a six-month business review that will be phased in from July 1.

He said he would work with staff to reduce jobs through redeployment, natural attrition and voluntary redundancies – and emphasised that management was actively encouraging staff to look at moving into other agencies or departments.

"First and foremost, there are no forced redundancies and there is no broad program of voluntary redundancies, so we are not offering voluntary redundancies at this point and we are not asking people across all staff to raise their hands," he said.

"The No.1 priority is redeployment of staff who are affected by change into either new roles that have come up under the model, into roles that are vacated or are currently vacant, or redeployment into other agencies in the public service."

He said cuts would affect staff at all levels and in all four of the archive's offices, in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, although the bulk of the staff are in Canberra. But he maintained that Friday's

announcement had not come out of the blue.

"At this point, every staffer affected by the changes had learned in one-on-one conversations about those changes," he said. "All I can say is to express my appreciation of our staff, how professional they [dealt] with this really, really difficult situation."

Community and Public Sector Union deputy secretary Beth Vincent-Pietsch said the job losses were concerning in an already difficult environment.

"Losing any positions in the cultural institutions will be keenly felt as there is simply no fat to trim," she said. "All the cultural institutions are under the pump with budget pressures and the NSFA is just one of several looking to cut positions in order to make ends meet. All of this is ahead of what is expected to be a tough budget and the National Commission of Audit, which is expected to usher in widespread cuts."

But Mr Loebenstein said the restructure had nothing to do with the current government or the upcoming budget.

"All I can firmly say is no, I am not privy to any secret knowledge, I am not privy to the national commission of audits or to the Treasurer's deliberations," he said. "All I know is that we must be able to sustainably live within our means."

"The message really is, it's not shut doors, it's not turning into a storage facility. There will be programs and we will be phasing them in over the course of the next couple of months, before the end of this calendar year, and they will be unique and they will be appropriate to the NFSAs mission."

100 more jobs to go at Customs

By Phillip Thomson
Public Service Reporter

Another 100 jobs are set to be cut from Customs and Border Protection before the end of the financial year. It will have lost 840 staff in six years, says the biggest union looking after public servants.

Community and Public Sector Union deputy secretary Rupert Evans said staff complained it was harder to maintain quality. "The thin blue line just keeps getting thinner in the service," he said.

"It's not just us saying it - last year Customs [chief executive] Michael Pezzullo told Senate estimates there

was no more fat to cut in the service and that any further cuts would 'go through the bone and out the other side'.

"There is no hiding from the fact that cutting Customs jobs increases the risk of drugs and firearms being smuggled into the country, and will lead to porous borders."

"Each year Customs gets busier, not less, so if significant gaps are emerging in those services then this government needs to tell people."

He said Customs told staff this week it would undertake a targeted program of 100 voluntary redundancies by June 30 to reduce full-time equivalent staff numbers to 5000.

Grammar Cadets crack code to get with the programs



By Fleeta Page

While yesterday's children were called on to set up the household VHS player, today's kids are coding web and mobile applications to automate and control entire home entertainment systems.

Students from Canberra Grammar School were showing off their application creations at the Apple Store on Friday, the product of a number of years of computer programming education from Matthew Purcell, perhaps better known to *Canberra Times* readers as The Silicon Kid.

As head of IT at the school, Mr Purcell started Code Cadets in 2011, a voluntary after-school activity for



boys wanting to learn how to code programs.

"It became so popular that our head of school... asked if I wanted to move into full-time teaching of it. That's when we started our year 9

and 10 courses," Mr Purcell said. "The boys enjoy doing it because it's practical - it's not a skill they learn for the sake of passing exams; it's a skill they can go out and use."

Code Cadets is still run for year 7 and 8 students, with one member, Damian Camilleri, using the Apple Store field trip to demonstrate his application to control all aspects of home entertainment through a website.

"Once I tried [Code Cadets] out the first week, it was like this is what I want to do, this is my career," Damian said. Canberra Grammar is one of only a few schools in the ACT to incorporate industry-standard coding and app development into their curriculum, and parents are also seeing the benefits.

Year 11 students Joshua Whitcombe and Samuel Moore showcased iPhone apps that can scan a barcode and estimate when the product will expire, and one that translates dietary information.

Sharon Moore said the course transformed her "quiet teenager" into a passionate, hard-working learner with "phenomenal ambition to go places with IT".

"It seems to be a bit of a niche - it's a new language, it's a bit like learning Russian or Martian - but if they can crack the code and work with it, they've got really unique skills," she said.

It may sound like Martian, but the languages they are learning to use - including HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, MySQL, Python, Objective-C and C - are the languages powering our digital world.

Mr Purcell said finding qualified teachers probably prevented more schools from incorporating coding.

"If you're a reasonably good programmer, you can go out into the industry and earn a six-figure amount of money rather than a school-teacher salary," he said.

WHIZ KIDS: Left to right, Canberra Grammar School year 8 students Jaxon Kneipp and Damian Camilleri, and year 11 students Josh Whitcombe and Sam Moore during a Code Cadets presentation at the Apple Store; below, staff hand out T-shirts. Photos: JEFFREY CHAN

Street cleared as firies take on intense Farrer house blaze



TOUGH TASK: Despite extreme heat and choking smoke, ACT firefighters were eventually able to get the upper hand in Raw Place on Friday night. Photo: JEFFREY CHAN

By Ben Westcott

A street in Farrer was evacuated on Friday night, as firefighters tackled a house fire so hot they were forced into a defensive position for two hours.

Several people called Triple Zero at about 6.20pm and three ACT Fire & Rescue pumps and two commanders attended the scene at Raw Place in Farrer.

Smoke from the house fire spread across large parts of Woden, with motorists able to smell it as far down Yamba Drive as Canberra Hospital.

Commander Ross Kennedy said firefighters using breathing apparatus had gone inside to check and found the house was empty, but retreated due to the intense heat.

Shortly afterwards, they were pushed into a defensive position due to the

strength of the fire and residents in the cul de sac were evacuated to behind a containment line.

By 8.20pm, firefighters had brought the fire under control, with only a few pockets of fire throughout the house.

Commander Kennedy said the roof had been well alight, but he could not speculate why it had spread or how it started.

"The trouble with roof fires is the trusses get weak and then you can have it come down on you," he said.

While some neighbours were concerned for their properties, Commander Kennedy said the fire had been contained to the house and no other residences were under threat.

Haz Mat crews were conducting atmospheric monitoring in nearby homes on Friday night before residents were allowed back into their homes.

ANZAC DAY

Friday 25 April 2014

Commemorating the 99th anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli and joined by Their Royal Highnesses **The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge** and **four Victoria Cross recipients**, this Anzac Day is expected to attract large crowds.

Images will be projected onto the façade of the Memorial from 9 pm on 24 April.

Pre-dawn readings will start at 4.25 am on 25 April. At 5 am there will be a moving tribute to the 40 men killed in Afghanistan. The Dawn Service begins at 5.30 am.

The National Ceremony starts at 10.15 am. The Ceremony includes the veterans' march, and a fly-over by the RAAF.

Anzac Day commemorations will conclude with the Last Post Ceremony at 4.55 pm, where Corporal Daniel Keighran VC will deliver the reading.

Important information:

- Free park-and-ride shuttle buses and public transport are the best way to get to the Memorial, as parking onsite is restricted. Shuttle services are available from Russell Offices and Majura Park car park. ACTION buses will also provide interchange services, visit ACTION website for timetables.
- Road closures will be in effect around the Memorial from 4 am to 1 pm.
- Viewing screens will be located on the grounds for both the Dawn Service and National Ceremony.