

# National Film Archive In jeopardy!

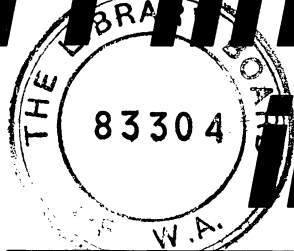
THE FUTURE of the National Film Archive is at risk. At a conference organised by the Australian Film Industry in September - to which representatives of the National Library were refused invitations - resolutions were passed calling for the film archives to be released from the National Library.

Despite a limited budget, the National Film Archive has made an outstanding contribution to the preservation of Australian film footage, particularly with the Last Film Search through which much previously unknown material was recovered.

Below is the text of a telex sent to the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment by the LAA:

The Library Association of Australia strongly supports the retention of the National Film Archive within the National Library of Australia. The Library, under its Act, is responsible for the development, on behalf of the Commonwealth, of a comprehensive collection of library materials including films and sound recordings relating to Australia and the Australian people. To remove from the Library such an integral part of the collection and record of Australian life as the Film Archive would be a retrograde step.

The National Library has the responsibility of making its collections of library material available in the most advantageous way in the



The German actress Brigitte Helm in the 1926 UFA production of *Metropolis*. An original nitrate print of this silent masterpiece was acquired by the National Library of Australia in 1980.



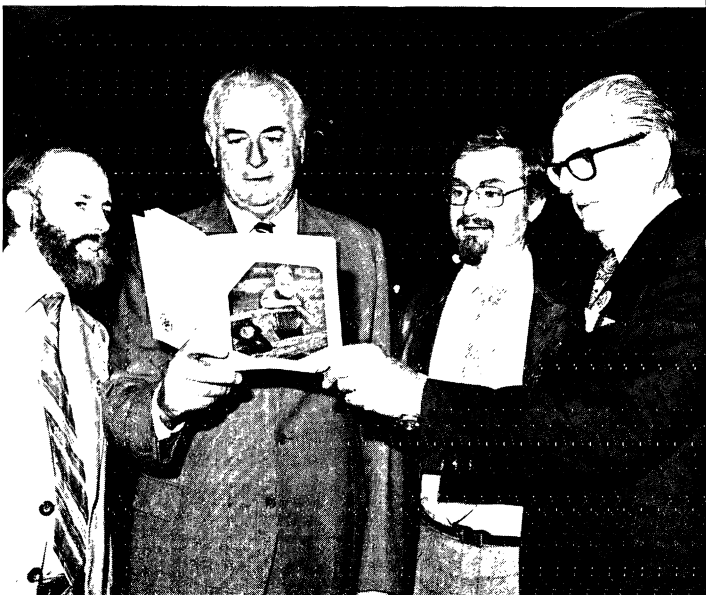
Lottie Lyell, star of *The Woman Suffers*, a Raymond Longford film uncovered by the Last Film Search.

national interest. For control of the National Film Archive to pass to sectional interests would not be implementing this charge in the best possible manner for either the National Library or the nation. The Library Association of Australia supports the needs of scholars, researchers and members of the general public who are also users of the National Film Archive.

The Library Association of Australia applauds the National Library's early recognition of the need to acquire, preserve and make available films at a time when no-one else, including the film industry, was concerned about preservation of the record of Australia's development. The National Film Archive has been nurtured since then and in recent years has had support over and above that given to other sections of the Library in a time of Government restraints on staffing and funding. The Library Association of Australia urges the Government to examine means of assisting the National Film Archive in its vital work for Australia other than severing it from the National Library of Australia.

Barrie Mitcheson  
President, LAA

Gough Whitlam launching the National Library of Australia's publication *Australia's Lost Films* in March 1982.  
Australian Information Service photograph by John Tan for the National Library of Australia



A scene from an Australian Pathe film made in 1912. This is a still from two 10-minute films given to the National Film Archive by the French National Centre of Cinematography, Paris.