

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 82
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.5
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: Funding and resources allocated to the Australian Heritage Council
Hansard Page: 55
Question Date: 26 May 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: I have one final question in this group. What was the total funding and extent of resources allocated to the Australian Heritage Council for the 2014-15 financial year?

Mr Oxley: If I may, I will take that one on notice. I do not think we will have it covered in any of our briefing notes. There are probably two components that I will identify. The first component is actually the salaries/wages or however one might describe it, the remuneration, for the Heritage Council members themselves and then the second component is the resources of Heritage branch that are used to support the work of the Heritage Council. For example, all the substantive work around the assessment of proposals that have been included on the final priority assessment list for national heritage assessment, and in the same list the Commonwealth heritage basis, is undertaken by the staff of the department working to the members of the council. We do a lot of the grunt work and then they add the value and test the veracity of our assessment and together they polish it up, finalise it and then it is presented to the Heritage Council. A large part of the resources of Heritage branch, in one way or another, is directed towards supporting the activities of the council. It may be difficult for us to specifically quantify it for that reason.

Mr Johnston: The Heritage Council receives \$50,000 per year over three years and the program is used for research into potential listings and nominations of places such as thematic studies.

Senator URQUHART: If you can search for further information that would be great.

Dr de Brouwer: Just for completeness, Mr Oxley went through a very long list of different organisations and bodies that were part of the consultation engagement. Fishers and the natural resource management regional bodies were also part of that list. As Mr Oxley said, a lot of the work now is actually designing the governance around some of those stakeholder engagements as follow-up to the 2050 long-term sustainability plan. We will be doing that very closely with Queensland.

Answer:

In 2014-15, the total budget for the salaries of the Australian Heritage Council members and Chair was \$265,240. The total budget for Council meetings, including travel and accommodation was \$88,400. In addition, approximately ten Heritage Branch staff supported Council fulfilling its legislative obligations in 2014-15.

The Heritage Council will also receive \$50,000 per annum over three years under the Community Heritage and Icons Grants programme. In 2014-15, the Council allocated these funds to the conduct of a thematic study into Australian Aboriginal Rock Art.