

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

National Portrait Gallery of Australia

Question No: 49

National Portrait Gallery of Australia

Hansard Ref: Page 23, 24/05/2017

Topic: Bald Archys

Senator Reynolds, Linda asked:

CHAIR: I have a couple of quick questions. The first one relates to—I have got to say this is a bit of a personal interest—the Bald Archys, which you would be aware of, and the wonderful work that Peter Batey, the great Australian does with the Bald Archys. I met with him recently, and he is now obviously getting on in years.

I understand that he may have approached the gallery about what happens to his collection of winners of the wonderful Australian, mostly political, satire. Is that something that you could have a look at again? I know there is a cost associated with looking at acquisitions, but could either you or perhaps you in conjunction with other galleries look at how you might be able to preserve and make these visible to the future? I think it is quite a unique satirical, artistic expression of Australian life and culture. Are you aware of that contact?

Mr Trumble: I am. I would be more than happy to look at that again.

Answer:

Decisions about acquisitions are made by the Board of the National Portrait Gallery having taken into account the Gallery's 'Collection Development Policy'. The Policy features a Statement of Principles which includes that the Collection is primarily constructed around representations of individuals who have influenced or contributed to the shaping of Australia as a nation and a society. The Gallery and its Board must also consider that acquisitions also meet the Gallery's responsibility to ensure adequate conservation, documentation and proper use, and takes into account limitations imposed by staffing, storage, conservation resources and display space.

This Policy reflects that the Gallery is unable to acquire every object it might wish to, and must give robust consideration to the quality and significance of each work in the context of the National Portrait Gallery's overarching purpose "to increase the understanding and appreciation of the Australian people – their identity, history, creativity and culture – through portraiture".

The National Portrait Gallery will re-consider the Bald Archys collection material with reference to the Collection Development Policy and current collecting priorities.