

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 2: Indigenous  
**Topic:** 1988 Referendum- cost incurred

**Senator:** Smith, Dean

**Question reference number:** 111

**Type of question:** FPA Friday 3 March 2017, page 37

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 13 April 2017

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator SMITH: To round off—because I know that time is now against me—I would like an idea of the total cost that was incurred by government for the 1988 referendum, the 1999 referendum and what was the total cost if the 2013 local government recognition and the constitutional referendum had been held because already we know that money has been reserved in the consolidated revenue account to hold a referendum which is money in addition to the almost \$50 million that we have heard about here today. Minister, have there been propositions? Are there currently propositions or proposals before government to provide more money to Recognise Australia or the Referendum Council?

Senator Scullion: There is an expectation that as we move to a referendum—and, of course, the date about the referendum is entirely a matter for the Referendum Council—I would expect that we need to anticipate that there would be further funds needed to ensure (a) that the public have a good understanding of the words but at this stage—

Senator SMITH: But there are no words.

Senator Scullion: At this stage there is some contemplation around further funds for RA but not necessarily for RECOGNISE. I think we should take that question on notice of exactly where that is up to. The last few questions I think went to me but an answer was able to be provided. I am sure they will be able to take that on notice.

Ms Hefren-Webb: We would have to take on notice the question around the cost of previous referendums.

**Answer:**

Cost of previous referenda

According to the Australian Electoral Commission:

- The cost incurred by the AEC for the 1988 referendum was \$34,447,200.
- The cost incurred by the AEC for the 1999 referendum was \$66,820,894.

- The 2013 local government referendum was planned to be held on the same day as the 2013 Federal Election, however when the 2013 polling date of 7 September was announced on 4 August, the Government also announced that the referendum would not be held on that day. The budgeted cost was \$44 million.

The costs outlined above relate only to the cost of holding a referendum. Additional funding may have been used for work in the lead up to each referendum.

Future funding for RECOGNISE and the Referendum Council

No future funding has been allocated to RECOGNISE or the Referendum Council beyond the 2016-2017 financial year.