

Department: Department of the Senate
Topic: Senate Occasional Lecture Series

Senator: Senator McKenzie
Question no: 5
Question type: Oral

Senator McKENZIE: I would like to take Dr Laing to a recurring theme of mine, which is the Occasional Lecture Series. Could you please give the committee an update on the answer that you provided on notice on the attendance figures and the costs for hosting?

Dr Laing: Yes, I can do that on notice for you, Senator.

Answer

The occasional lecture series is a program under the following Procedure Office output.

Research and parliamentary information for senators, staff, public servants, officials from other parliaments, and the community; and support for inter-parliamentary relations.

Update on the attendance at the occasional lectures over recent calendar years.

Year	Attendance*
2008	1,230
2009	1,100
2010	1,230
2011	1,640
2012	1,025
2013	1,250
2014**	1,065

* Attendance is estimated from headcount taken by staff.

** Three further lectures are scheduled for October, November and December 2014.

For 2014, attendance at the various lectures was as follows.

Date	Presenter	Topic	Attendance
14 February	Mr Anthony Green	Is it time for a fundamental review of the Senate's electoral system?	190
7 March	Mr Alex Oliver	Are Australians disenchanted with democracy?	135
11 April	Professor Andrew Markus	Trust in the Australian political system.	110
30 May	Mr Stephen Bartos	There is no accountability until someone cares: The role of the Senate in public sector performance.	115

Date	Presenter	Topic	Attendance
27 June	Mr Greg Jericho and Ms Judith Ireland	The impact of social media on political journalism.	130
11 July	Professor Megan Davis	Competing notions of constitutional 'recognition': truth and justice or living 'off the crumbs that fall off the White Australian tables'.	140
8 August	Professor Linda Trimble	"Abolition difficult, reform impossible, status quo unacceptable": Can Canada fix its Senate?	75
12 September	Dr Brendan Nelson	The role of the Australian Parliament when going to war.	170
24 October	Professor Helen Irving	Pulling the trigger: the 1914 double dissolution election and its legacy.	
28 November	Mr Colin Neave AM	An exploration of the role of the Ombudsman in relation to Parliament.	
5 December	Professor Ross Garnaut	G20	

The department pays an honorarium (except where it is declined or it is inappropriate for the presenter to accept) and travel costs for the presenters.

Over the last four financial years, the department's spend is as follows.

Financial year	Honorarium	Travel and associated costs
2011-12	\$3,500	\$2,571
2012-13	\$3,500	\$4,287
2013-14 ^	\$4,954	\$4,414
2014-15*	\$1,000	\$787

[^] 2013-14 featured two panels with a total of five participants hence the increase in honoraria.

* There have been three lectures in 2014-15 to date.

The figures previously provided for travel and associated costs have been updated following the discovery of an inconsistency between the information kept by the line area responsible for the lectures and that held by the finance section.

The 2011-12 figure has increased by \$719. In the case of the 2012-13 figure, the discrepancy was more significant; \$3,665. The change to the 2013-14 figure reflects the end of financial year total.

The department apologises to the Committee for the error.