

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 2

Program: 2.1

Question No. BE15/002

Senator Jacinta Collins asked the following written question from the 27 and 28 May 2015 hearing:

1. Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I asked: would you please take on notice, for the committee, directing us to those areas where you have outlined your views about contestability and the Australia Council as a monopoly?

Senator Brandis: Thank you.

2. Senator JACINTA COLLINS: The minister has said that the new program will make funding available to a wider range of arts companies and arts practitioners. What kinds of arts organisations and artists will be included in this wider range that are not currently being considered for funding by the Australia Council?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. The Minister's views about contestability and the Australia Council as a monopoly funder of the arts have been outlined in many public speeches, and in interviews, for example, with Michael Cathcart on the Radio National Books and Arts program on 19 May 2015. The transcript of the interview can be found online at <http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/transcripts/Pages/2015/SecondQuarter/19-May-2015-Interview-with-Michael-Cathcart-Radio-National-Books-and-Arts-program.aspx>.

Australian Government funding to the arts has traditionally been distributed in two ways – first, through decisions of the government of the day as represented by the Minister for the Arts. Second, at arm's length from the government through decisions made by the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding agency. It is important that the balance between these two funding sources is right and the reallocation of funding addresses what the Government considers is an imbalance in the way in which funding has been administered for the arts in Australia.

2. The National Program for Excellence in the Arts announced in the 2015-16 Budget will commence in early 2015-16.

Guidelines for the Program are currently being developed and there will be a public announcement once they are released. The Guidelines, including details of the application process and eligibility criteria, will be available on the Ministry's website at www.arts.gov.au.