



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts



Senator Anne McEwen

Chair

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator McEwen

On 8 February 2010, I appeared as a witness before the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts for the 2009-10 Additional Estimates Hearing.

During the hearing, Senator Troeth asked a number of questions relating to membership vacancies on the Australia Council and its artform boards. I wish to clarify some of my responses to the Senator's questions.

The *Australia Council Act 1975* (the Act) determines that the Council shall comprise not less than 10 and not more than 14 members and that the artform boards shall comprise a Chairperson and not less than 4 and not more than 8 members. There are no vacancies below the minimum required by the Act for the Council and its artform boards.

In response to Senator Troeth seeking confirmation that there are two existing vacancies on the Australia Council and that they are in the process of being filled I indicated that this was correct. Whilst the Act allows for 14 members of the Council the current target membership is 13. At the time of the hearing there were 11 members of Council with action being undertaken to fill one vacancy for a Community Interest Representative.

Senator Troeth asked if action was being undertaken to fill four vacancies for the Literature Board, in my response I indicated that all four vacancies were in process. Whilst the Act allows for nine members of the Literature Board, the Council's current target membership is seven. Accordingly, as at the date of the hearings, action was being taken to fill two positions.

Similarly, the target number of members of the Visual Arts Board is eight, although the Act provides for a maximum of nine. Action was underway at the time of the hearings to fill two vacancies which would bring the total membership to eight.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Bean
First Assistant Secretary
Arts Division

26 February 2010