

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

2005-06 Additional Budget Estimates Hearings

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

QUESTION: PM58

Senator Evans asked:

1. "Are any artworks or items from the National Gallery of Australia, the joint house committee or the Australiana Fund currently on loan to either of the PM's official residences?"
2. If so, please provide a complete list of these objects and artworks together with an indication of the source of the loan, the value of each item and the duration of the loan.
3. Are any artworks or items from the National Gallery of Australia, the joint house committee or the Australiana Fund currently on loan to the Governor General's residences?"
4. If so, please provide a complete list of these objects and artworks together with an indication of the source of the loan, the value of each item and the duration of the loan.
5. Does PM&C provide insurance for any or all of this material or do you rely on the Government's own re-insurance policy?"
6. Are all items on loan hung or displayed in climate controlled space?"
7. How often are the public and private spaces in the residences where loaned items are displayed monitored with thermo-hydrographs to determine changes in humidity?"
8. How often are these spaces tested to determine the 'lux' levels of light?"
9. Do the residences where loaned items are displayed conform to recommended light levels in all spaces where items are hung or displayed?"
10. Who undertakes these assessments?"
11. How often is such monitoring carried out?"
12. Please provide copies of thermo-hydrograph and light readings for both the Lodge and Kirribilli House?"
13. Does the office of the Prime Minister have a formal policy on the display and safeguarding of paintings and other heritage items in the official residences?"
14. Please provide a copy of it.
Has any item or painting on loan to the PM or Governor General been damaged in the past five years? If so, provide details.
15. Has anything on loan to the PM or Governor General been stolen in the past five years? If so, provide details.
16. Who chooses the items to be loaned from the Joint House Department or the NGA? Is it the PM himself or are decisions made on his behalf?"

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Response:

The following responses are provided to the questions asked of the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General:

3. Yes.
4. A list of artworks on loan was provided to the Committee on 3 February 2006 in response to a question asked by Senator Faulkner and taken on notice during the Supplementary Budget Hearings in November 2006. The objects from the Australiana Fund have been loaned on a semi-permanent basis subject to recall for conservation or loan to other agencies. The Office enters into loan agreements with the National Gallery of Australia and the Department of Parliamentary Services that are renewed each three years. The object from the Museum of Tropical Queensland is on loan for a period of three years.
5. The Office insures all items on loan through its insurer Comcover.
6. No.
7. The National Gallery has advised that detailed assessments were made of all official residences in the 1980s and that environmental conditions continue to be monitored on a regular basis, generally during annual inspections.
8. The National Gallery has advised that light readings have been taken previously and a check of light levels is undertaken during their annual condition checks. The Department of Parliamentary Services has advised that the display space at Government House was assessed before and during the installation of works in February/March 2006.
9. The National Gallery and the Department of Parliamentary Services have advised that most spaces where objects are displayed do not conform to recommended light levels. However, the environmental conditions are considered by all organisations when selecting works appropriate for display in the official residences and when discussing the positioning of the objects.
10. The testing of 'lux' levels has been undertaken by National Gallery and Department of Parliamentary Services staff.
11. The National Gallery has advised that monitoring is carried out when objects on loan are changed and during the annual assessment and stocktake.
14. Over the last five years the following item was damaged while on display at Admiralty House –
February 2004. Damage to frame of painting *View de la Seine* by John Peter Russell when the painting fell from its hanging fixture due to a wall plug coming out of the wall.
15. No.