

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearing 25-29 May 2009

Question: PM46a-b

Outcome 1, Output 5

Topic: Australiana Fund grant

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PM46a:

Senator FIELDING-From what I understand, the grant is or was to be used for the purposes of obtaining professional assistance and the purpose of the fund is to acquire Australian objects for display in the residences of the Prime Minister and the Governor-General. That money, \$117,000, seems a lot to spend on what I would call interior design. That is a lot of money.

Mr Mrdak-This is a long-established arrangement whereby the Australian government provides a grant each year to support the work of the Australiana Fund? I will take on notice, if you do not mind, the breakdown of how much our grant sits vis-a-vis the overall funding for the Australiana Fund. I will get that for you this morning if I can and provide that to you.

PM46b:

Mr Mrdak-Certainly. I am happy to provide you some information in relation to that particular grant. We look annually at the provision of the grant. It is made from departmental funds. We look at it very hard. I recollect that last year in relation to the grant we worked quite closely with the Australiana Fund as to their requirements. As you will appreciate, the collection would certainly much more Australian government funding. But we, given budget restrictions and the like, need to tailor our grant to the most effective use. Hence, the bulk of the funding that was provided last year was for expert curatorial advice, which would not otherwise be able to be funded by the Australiana Fund. I will check if there is any further information that I can give to you.

Answer: The grant-in-aid provided to The Australiana Fund is to enable the Fund to obtain professional assistance in meeting the objects of the Fund as set out in its Memorandum of Association; and to free up funds for the acquisition of Australian objects for placement or display in accordance with these objects. No grant monies are used for the acquisition or conservation of objects.

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The grant comprises employment costs for an expert adviser, office accommodation rent and outgoings, office services such as facsimile and photocopier usage and Internet access fees.

The Fund raises money through membership fees, donations and fundraising activities for the acquisition of objects and conservation of its collection. The grant represents around half of the total annual income of the Fund.