

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 2.1. Arts and Cultural Development

**Topic:** Arts – PM&C PBS 2011-12

**Senator:** Senator Brandis

**Question reference number:** 76

**Type of Question:** F&PA, p 130, 17 October

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 2 December 2011

**Number of pages:** 2

### Question:

Senator BRANDIS: I do not want to waste the precious little time we have. I want to record the point that I myself, if I might respectfully suggest, would have thought that the ultimate objective of a cultural policy is to promote excellence in the arts. The next objective of a cultural policy would be to make the arts as accessible as possible to all Australians. Those are mentioned in other objectives, but they are not the first goals to be identified which strikes me as curious. Mr Eccles, do you have a copy of the discussion paper in front of you?

Mr Eccles: Yes, I do.

Senator BRANDIS: On page 8 there is a table of funding under the self-advertising heading, key components of Australian government investment in a strong and creative culture in Australia. The explanatory words follow in a sentence in parentheses below that these are expenditures for the 2011-12 year. The message I take is that the expenditure priorities recorded in the table that follows are meant to proclaim that the current Australian government does have a commitment to investment in a strong and creative culture in Australia, as the self-advertising headline says. That is what the reader would glean from that.

Mr Eccles: That is what the document says. It is important to note that these particular pages were designed to provide context to readers who may not be familiar with the role of the Commonwealth in supporting arts and cultural activities. It was certainly seen to be an important part of setting the scene to ensure that the debate was based on as much information as possible.

Senator BRANDIS: I am very glad you have said that, Mr Eccles. Let us add a bit more information to this debate, if we may. In the left-hand column on page 8, there is

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tabulated the Commonwealth's commitment to investment in various key arts agencies in the 2011-12 financial year. Do you have a copy of the PM&C portfolio budget statement for 2011-12 with you?

Mr Eccles: Yes.

Senator BRANDIS: Again, because of the pressure of time, I want to get this down for the record, but may I assure you that I have checked each of these figures and each of these figures marries up with the line item, total annual appropriations for the nominated agency in table 1.2—that is, agency resource statement—

Mr Eccles: Can you give me a page reference?

Senator BRANDIS: for the relevant agency—for example, the Australia Council, page 87; the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, page 108; the Australian National Maritime Museum, page 127; the National Gallery of Australia, page 195; the National Library, page 216; the National Museum of Australia, page 238; and the Archives, page 387. If we had unlimited time, I would take you through them item by item, but may I assure you that I have checked these, and those figures for the agencies I have identified, which you list, are the figures coming from the PBS for 2011-12. Okay?

Mr Eccles: I have not had time to look at this, but I obviously accept—

Senator BRANDIS: Please check them at your leisure and, if I have made a mistake, please correct them on notice-

Senator Arbib: We are happy to come back to you on this.

Mr Eccles: I am not sure-

Senator BRANDIS: I can let you know that those figures marry up, and the PBS, as you would expect, seems to be the source from which this table is derived. Okay? All right.

Senator Arbib: We will need to check that, Senator.

#### **Answer:**

Yes. The figures for the cultural institutions and agencies on page 8 of the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper are consistent with the figures from the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2011-12 Portfolio Budget Statements.