



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 1

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2008-2009

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1

Arts

Tuesday 14 October 2008

Answers to be lodged by: Friday 7 November 2008

Budget Estimates Secretariat
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Questions relating to the portfolio of Arts

14 OCTOBER 2008, 5:15 pm – 6.00 pm

Questions from Ms Hale

1. REVIEW OF THE NSW CULTURAL GRANTS PROGRAM
 - a. Will an Arts NSW infrastructure audit be undertaken?
 - b. What audience development initiatives will be introduced by Arts NSW to increase audience numbers?
 - c. Will Arts NSW now focus on a small number of shows with large audiences rather than a mix of shows including small innovative productions with small audience numbers?
 - d. How will these audience development initiatives affect funding applicants?
2. NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ART
 - a. When will the Taskforce Report into the future of the National School of Art be released?
 - b. Why was this report not released at the end of 2007 as promised?
 - c. Will the Report ensure that the unique Atelier system of teaching is continued?
 - d. Will the existing staff to student ratio be continued?
 - e. Will the Schools independence be guaranteed?
 - f. Has the State Government begun talks with the Federal Government to ensure that future Federal funding will be guaranteed?
3. UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY
 - a. Why has the Drama Program at the University been closed down?
 - b. Why have the Visual Arts courses been closed off to students?
 - c. Why are potential students being directed to TAFE courses?
 - d. How do these cutbacks relate to the Western Sydney Arts Strategy?
4. FLEET CARS
 - a. What is the percentage of hybrids in the car fleet associated with the Arts portfolio?
 - b. Is there a mechanism within the agency to reward staff who choose not to exercise an entitlement to a fleet vehicle as a part of their package but use public transport instead?
 - c. What car does the Director-General drive?

Questions from Ms Cusack

Public Libraries

Library Funding

5. Given that NSW already has the lowest per capita public library funding levels in Australia, how can you justify cutting State Government library funding by more than 5% from 2005-06 to 2008-09? (from \$24.808m in 05/06 to \$23.528m in 08/09)
6. How do you respond to Dr Alan Bundy AM, President of Friends of Libraries Australia, who said “racing ahead in the poor library funding stakes is the State Government of NSW, which contributes less than 7 per cent (of funding) – an inglorious and world-reported charge?

7. Is it fair that the NSW Local Councils have been left to fund 93% of public library funding and the NSW Government only contribute 7%, when the next lowest contributor is the West Australian Local Government which contributes 18%?
8. Are you aware of the anger being expressed by Councils and public libraries right across the state because of the shortfall in government funding for libraries?
9. What do you say to councils, librarians, and the communities they serve when a lack of funding forces them to consider either charging to borrow books or even closing the local library down?
10. Government online services have created a demand on public library services which amounts to cost shifting – eg RTA driving licenses, transport booking, school study notes etc. Will your funding review provide a fee for these services libraries provide?
11. Will you respond to requests for longer term funding agreements such as is the case in South Australia and Western Australia – where five year budgets are identified?
12. Internet access at public libraries
 - i) Has any money been provided in the budget for the installation of Internet filtering technology in all NSW public libraries?
 - ii) If not, why not?
 - iii) If so, how much money has been provided?
 - iv) When will Internet filtering technology be installed in all NSW public libraries?

Parry Review

13. How do you respond to concerns expressed about the Parry Review into library funding that there was a lack of consultation because the review only accepted submissions from the “peak bodies” rather than individual libraries?
14. Why did the review not look into the quantity of library funding?
15. The review recommended that proportion of funding going to Access Funding should be 25%. However that is less than the amount currently directed to Disability and Geographic Adjustments (26%), Vision Australia (0.6%) and the Outback Letterbox Library (0.4%). How will you guarantee that the Parry Review’s recommendation will not have a negative outcome on the equity of library services across NSW?

Library legislation

16. Have you given any consideration to removing legislative restrictions to allow libraries to be legal entities in their own right?

NSW Film and Television Office

17. I understand Linda Burney's visit to the Cannes Film Festival in May this year was to announce the \$60,000 Sydney Film Prize. Given that the trip cost taxpayers \$35,471.37, wouldn't it have been better to have the Minister for Arts announce the \$60,000 prize at the Sydney Film Festival which opened a few weeks later on 4 June 2008 in Sydney at no cost to the taxpayer?
18. Only 3 of the 14 meetings Linda Burney attended in Cannes were with foreign companies or representatives. Do you believe it was really necessary to travel all the way to Cannes at a cost of \$35,000 to taxpayers to meet with:
 - a. Tania Chambers, Chief Executive of NSW Film and Television Office and Renato Rispoli, Events NSW
 - b. NSW-based film producer Alexander Herhet
 - c. Sydney based film producer Rosemary Blight
 - d. Australian film makers Mario Andreaccio and John Wild
 - e. Lori Fleckser, Australian Film Commission
 - f. Representatives from Sydney based firm Omnilab
 - g. Clare Stewart, Sydney Film Festival
 - h. Australian Reception hosted by Australian Film Commission
 - i. Representatives from the Screen Producers Association of Australia
 - j. A Sydney Film Festival Jury Member
 - k. Australian Filmmakers Joel Edgerton and Matthew Newton
19. What were the outcomes of Linda Burney's junket? Are there any new productions being filmed in NSW as a direct result of her trip?
20. One of the stated objectives of the trip was to "demonstrate the Iemma Government's determination to cut red tape". The trip was in May, but legislation to actually cut any red tape wasn't introduced until June. Wouldn't a better way of demonstrating a determination to cut red tape have been getting on with the job and cutting the red tape, rather than spending \$35,000 on a junket to talk about it.
21. The NSW Film and Television Office had its budget cut by 5.5% or \$588,000 from 2007-08 to 2008-09. How can you justify cutting its budget when at the same time Ministers are spending \$35,471.37 to jet set to Cannes to announce a \$60,000 prize?

Cultural Institutions

Art Gallery of NSW

22. The revised 2007/08 budget for the NSW Art Gallery was \$40,647,000, but the 2008/09 budget has been cut by 2% to \$39,648,000. Which projects/initiatives have been cut as result of the budget cuts?

Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

23. The revised 2007/08 budget for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences was \$46,648,000, but the 2008/09 budget has been cut by 5.3% to \$44,177,000. Which projects/initiatives have been cut as result of the budget cuts?

Historic Houses Trust

24. The revised 2007/08 budget for the Historic Houses Trust was \$28,439,000, but the 2008/09 budget has been cut by 1.4% to \$28,052,000. Which projects/initiatives have been cut as result of the budget cuts?

Arts NSW Cultural Grants

25. According to SMH report on 1 August 2008 "NSW, state of big audiences but of little arts funding" cultural grants have been cut by \$3 million or 10% from \$29 million last year to \$26 million this year. Is that correct?
26. Why have you cut funding for important cultural programs?
27. How are Arts NSW cultural grants allocated? What is the timeframe between an organisation making an application for a grant and a determination being made?
28. A number of art groups in NSW have complained about the confusing process and extended waits for Arts NSW Cultural Grants. In February this year one organisation described the extended waits for grants as "a crisis" saying "We need to know what our funding situation for this year will be. We've had to postpone a workshop for young people that was supposed to happen in March, and we haven't been able to confirm the contracts of some of our performers." Have you taken any actions to ensure the arts community will not suffer as they did last year waiting anxiously for grants?
29. How do you respond to advice that "ARTISTS and performers chasing success in Sydney should pack their bags and leave. Head to Melbourne, Perth or Brisbane. Anywhere really, as long as it is outside NSW. That is the advice from some of Sydney's most experienced independent artists, fed up with delays from the state's leading arts funding body." (SMH 1 August 2008, *NSW, state of big audiences but of little arts funding*, Louise Schwartzkoff)
30. Why has the Australia Council for the Arts been advising grant applicants "not to hang around NSW as there are better opportunities for funding in the other states and territories?"