

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Old Parliament House

Question No: 53

Old Parliament House

Hansard Ref: Page 37, 24/05/2017

Topic: Reduction in the number of free open days each year

Senator Gallagher, Katy asked:

Ms Karp: The model that I talked about at, I think, the last Senate estimates was really very much based on us being able to raise external revenue, because the underfunded capital plan and the building meant that we are not able to do big blockbuster exhibitions, so we have to have an entirely different approach. Largely, that is through tenancy. We are very fortunate that we have a building that has some space that we can make available, and so we have been actively targeting new tenants and also been very, very ruthless about having fewer free days, for example. We have increased our fees to students for our school programs. We have increased our revenue by about 50 per cent, which is pretty remarkable for a small organisation such as ours.

Senator GALLAGHER: What does 'fewer free days' mean?

Ms Karp: We would regularly open the museum to the public for free. I should say that the entry fee to the museum is a nominal \$2, which, I think, belies the value that you get when you come to a museum like ours. But, having said that, there are still those who feel that it is a public building that was built when government was here on the public purse and therefore they should have free access. Also, we believe very strongly that—

Senator GALLAGHER: Some of the other national institutions are free to access.

Ms Karp: They have free access but they charge for—

Senator GALLAGHER: For particular exhibitions.

Ms Karp: their primary exhibitions. We cannot do that because we do not have that sort of set-up and space. We would offset that by having a significant number of free days each year. We have now decided to have far fewer of those free days each year.

Senator GALLAGHER: So what does that mean? That is what I am trying to get to. Have you halved the number of free days?

Ms Karp: It would be more than halved. I do not have those figures; I will have to take it on notice.

Answer:

The total number of free entry days during 2015/16 was eighty-one.

Sixty-nine of these days were due to the closure of the front entry during capital works.

The remaining twelve were free days.

Total number of free entry days for 2016/17 to 24 May 2017 is five.