



Submission No 36

Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation

Supplementary submission

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Australian Government
Department of Industry
Innovation, Science, Research
and Tertiary Education

Dr John Carter
Enquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
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Dear Mr Carter

REFERENCE: INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION

Please be advised that further to appearing before the Foreign Affairs Sub Committee on Friday 10 February 2012, I wish to provide a response to the question taken on notice regarding the British Council.

I have provided the information **Supplementary submission**

Yours sincerely

Mr Colin Walters
Head of Division
International Education Division

29 February 2012

Attachments

1. Response to the question on notice

ATTACHMENT 1

Question on Notice**Colin Walters, International Education Division****QUESTION**

Mr Walters: For example, in the education space you will always get comparisons with the British Council, which is probably a world leader in terms of having an educational promotion organisation but with a much wider remit, because they do cultural things as well.

CHAIR: Can you send us some information about what they do?

Mr Walters: Yes, gladly. I would simply make the point they have much larger resources. I think they have 40 staff in Hong Kong alone, whereas we have one locally employed person.

CHAIR: Are they government funded?

Mr Walters: Not entirely, actually, and that is a point which people often misunderstand. They have an income stream that comes from running things like examination sessions. Across the world, English language exams are actually a big industry sector, if you like, because people need English language qualifications to get into colleges and universities. A lot of that is run in association with the British Council, but they also conduct a lot of the examinations. Together with IDP Australia, they helped to develop the IELTS system, which is one of the leading systems for assessing people's English language competency. That brings them quite a big income stream. In Australia, all that work is done privately. We have done a little bit in the past, but it is not a major income stream for us as it is with the British Council.

Supplementary submission**RESPONSE**

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/>

In the presentation, A Short History of the British Council

(<http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/PageFiles/12882/A%20Short%20History%20of%20the%20British%20Council%202009.pdf>) they say:

Our founding Charter is 'promoting abroad a wider appreciation of British culture and civilisation [by] encouraging cultural, educational and other interchanges between the United Kingdom and elsewhere'. It is an organisation with "over 220 offices in 110 countries and territories across the world, a turnover of more than £600 million and 7,400 employees – 15 per cent of whom are in the UK and 85 per cent in the other countries in which we operate. Put simply, the British Council exists to build trust between the UK and other countries and people and thereby win lifelong friends for Britain. Around the world, we transparently seek the engagement of high-level groups such as ministers, university heads, business leaders and those media professionals that influence public perceptions, and we also give particular priority to working with, and for, young people from every background. In addition, we act as agents for change and development by our contract work with the Department for International Development, the European Union and other international bodies. Our activities extend over a huge spectrum, including educational promotion and provision at all levels, creativity of every kind through our arts and science programmes, governance training, human rights projects, support for education reform and training for community and sports leadership. In short, our work is not abstract: the British Council strives to ensure that the partners and users with whom we engage gain aesthetic, vocational or enabling benefit so that they can value the engagement, contribute to it with confidence, and – on that basis – develop trust.