

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates – May 2017
ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

Program 1: Support for the Governor-General and Official Activities

Outcome 1: The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.

Topic: Order of Australia

Senator: Wong

Question reference number: 262

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 July 2017

Number of Pages: 1

- a) With reference to evidence about the benchmarking process, for the awards of Member of the Order of Australia and the order of Australia Medal, is there a comparison made to ensure that someone who receives the medal has a résumé similar to other medal recipients, and that no members are appointed with a lesser résumé than someone who is awarded the medal?
- b) If not, how can the secretariat be sure decisions are being made fairly and in a way that is appropriately reflective of a nominee's contribution?

Answer:

- a) There are no formal criterion other than the broad description contained in the Constitution for the Order of Australia. It is a matter for the collective judgement and expertise of the Council to recommend the level of the award or appointment. Each nomination is considered on a case-by-case basis. It is likely that each awardee will have a different range of service and contribution. There is also a degree of variability within each award level (ie. one might be relatively stronger than another but both still be recommended within the same category).
- b) There is no right or entitlement to an award within the Order of Australia. The award is essentially a gift of the Sovereign as delegated to the Governor-General. It is up to the collective wisdom of the Council to consider the appropriate level at which an award might be recommended. Detailed information is always available for the Council about comparable past recipients to assist with the consideration process.