

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 72

Program 2.1

Hansard Ref: Page 94, 09/02/2016

Topic: Suzanne O'Connell Gallery

Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:

Senator BILYK: I just have a few more questions I might ask you, but you will probably have to take them on notice. What representations were made on behalf of the Suzanne O'Connell Gallery or in support of the project by Mr Tony Abbott?

Ms Basser: There were no representations by Mr Abbott.

Senator BILYK: Who assessed the project?

Ms Basser: We are not disclosing who assessed the individual projects. We will at the end of every calendar year provide an overall list of the independent assessors that we have used throughout the year.

Senator BILYK: Okay, but can you give the breakdown like you did before—whether it was two members from outside and one internal?

Ms Basser: It was the same—it was two independent external assessors, drawn from the register, and one internal assessor.

Senator BILYK: And how was the figure of 500,000 visitors to the exhibition arrived at?

Ms Basser: Again, I would need to go back to the business case for the details of the application.

Senator BILYK: And while you are doing that you might tell me what the money will actually be spent on—the total cost of the project. And has all the money been raised? Also, I am interested in finding out more about the public programs at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco—what they are specifically and what the funds will be spent on and how much of the money will be spent on those public programs. I am also interested in how, to quote the minister's media release, the project will 'strengthen Australia's reputation as a sophisticated and artistic nation and forge new relationships with French cultural institutions'—specifically, which of the French cultural institutions? I am also interested in the fact that \$485,450 would actually have funded two organisations for a year. I just find it astounding that one organisation could get—

Ms Basser: But it is going to 51 individual artists.

Answer:

The figure of 500,000 visitors is the grant recipient's estimate based on anticipated visitors to the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco during the summer period.

The grant is provided to Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, auspicing the Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, to support the development of the exhibition to be toured to Monaco and support a partnership with the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and Musée des Confluences in Lyon. The grant is to be spent on production of the art works (including materials), freight and touring costs (including installation and dismantling), and project administration related costs, which includes travel and fees for artists and project management staff. It also includes costs associated

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with creating the exhibition support materials and documentation (such as the development of the catalogue for publication and filming of the project). The total budget for the project is \$1,244,816. Most of the money has been raised.

The public programme will introduce members of the public to the exhibition. The *Catalyst* grant will contribute \$54,000 toward total travel costs to enable key artists to travel to Monaco to attend the opening of the exhibition and provide talks, and travel costs for dancers from the Torres Strait Islands who will perform during events to mark the exhibition opening. The *Catalyst* grant will also provide \$47,000 toward exhibition support materials such as the catalogue, which provides a comprehensive essay on the artworks, artists and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. In addition to the activities at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, the Musée des Confluences in Lyon is developing a public programme to coincide with the exhibition, which will include a special performance by the Torres Strait Islander dancers, and will extend the project's impact to the south of France.

The Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and Musée des Confluences in France attract visitors from around the world. The exhibition, public programmes and related publicity collectively expose new international audiences in Monaco and southern France to the contemporary works of these Australian artists and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The successful partnership with these two museums will provide ongoing opportunities for the project participants through the professional development experience and networks gained and by developing new international markets for the work of these artists. The project has a high profile and will be opened by Prince Albert II of Monaco, with Australia's Ambassador to France, HE Stephen Brady also in attendance. Australia's Embassy in France will leverage broader cultural diplomacy benefits through this project.