

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2015

Communications Portfolio

National Film and Sound Archive

Question No: 68

National Film and Sound Archive

Hansard Ref: Written, 30/10/2015

Topic: Further Questions: BE15/073

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

1. We note that the attendance decreased as per the figures published in the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 Annual Reports. Why was this not addressed during the 2012-13 financial year with performance management and business model adjustments, as has since been afforded to the Screening Loans section given that the Arc Cinema program had the higher potential for revenue and partnerships than the film lending program?
2. To clarify, a “full service cinema” is one that can screen print and archival formats, in addition to newer digital formats. We note that Arc Cinema is now the only professional cinema in Canberra with these capabilities. We note that other film archives, such as the British Film Institute, have a commitment to screening classic and archival titles in the original format as part of their outreach and preservation programs. Again, what does the NFSA see as the role of a full service cinema in a film archive, in the promulgation of Australia’s film culture?
3. When will this tender process be finalised, and when will we see the beginnings of operation of a less ad-hoc cinema program at Arc cinema, noting that it is a government asset valued in the millions?

Answer:

1. The Business Review found that “the current program (regular cinémathèque programming of 4-7 screenings a week) has no more growth potential and is not supported by a large enough public in Canberra. Revenue from the program falls significantly short of the total direct and indirect costs of delivery.” The decision to cease the existing program was made following consideration of the future options for the Arc cinema as part of the Business Review.
2. Under the *National Film and Sound Archive Act 2008* the NFSA has a legislative mandate to share the national audiovisual collection. The Arc Cinema provides a platform to facilitate access to the collection, as part of a suite of activities conducted within the NFSA’s existing resources. The NFSA continues to offer screenings in a range of formats in the Arc Cinema as outlined in the NFSA’s quarterly program.
3. The tender has been finalised. The NFSA publishes a quarterly program of Canberra-based activities including screenings and special events in the Arc cinema.