

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 51

Program 2.1

Hansard Ref: Written, 28/10/2016

Topic: UNESCO Convention – Safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage

Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:

UNESCO CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH CONVENTION)

1. What are the reasons that Australia has not ratified this convention despite 170 other countries having done so?
2. Are there any plans for Australia to ratify the ICH convention?
3. Is there any other information, comments or opinions that can be provided about the Government's position on the ICH convention, either now or in the past?

Answer:

1. While the Australian Government has not ratified the 2003 Convention, protection of intangible cultural heritage occurs through a wide range of policies, programs and practices.

Specifically, the Australian Government is committed to supporting the preservation and maintenance of intangible cultural heritage, including funding activities that contribute to the revival and maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and arts.

In 2015-16, the Australian Government invested more than \$100 million in the promotion and preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (\$45.89 million) and programmes managed by other departments and agencies (\$59.46 million)

Funding is also provided to develop, produce, present, exhibit and perform Australia's traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultural and artistic expressions. International and national cultural exchanges, festivals and events are also supported which showcase multicultural, traditional and contemporary intangible cultural heritage practice in Australia and overseas.

Additionally on 26 June 2016, the Australian Government announced a further \$10 million over four years (2016-17 to 2019-20) to protect, preserve and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

2. This is a matter for the Government.
3. No