

**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: 9**

**Program 1.1**

**Hansard Ref: Page 17 and page 19, 18/10/2016**

**Topic: Gender Balance on Arts boards**

**Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:**

**Senator BILYK:** Good. I have had a look at the make-up of a number of the boards and cultural institutions, and there seems to be some disparity with gender balance, and some have no appointees from diverse backgrounds. What steps are being taken to ensure that the membership of all boards and councils reflect diversity goals and have gender balance?

**Senator Fifield:** There is a whole-of-government objective to improve gender balance on boards. I think, taking my portfolio as a whole, both communications—

**Senator BILYK:** I am asking specifically about the arts area.

**Senator Fifield:** I appreciate that, but looking at it on a portfolio basis I think we do well, and officers at the table will be able to give us the statistics on that. But, obviously, I am keen not just to address this on a portfolio-wide basis but also board by board.

**Ms Talbot:** The department is actively working towards the new gender diversity target of a 50 per cent balance on portfolio board positions. We actively monitor the diversity of portfolio board appointments, and the secretary has written to all agency heads advising portfolio agencies of the new gender diversity targets and of the need to be committed and accountable to achieve gender balance on boards. Recently we had to provide results to the whole-of-government Gender balance on Australian government boards report 2015-16. That was for the whole portfolio. We had 45.1 per cent women appointed to boards as at 30 June, 2016. I should note that that does not include managing directors of Australia Post, ABC, SBS and staff-elected positions on the ABC board. The latest results we have for gender balance across the portfolios is that we are now sitting at 47 per cent female, so we have slightly increased since we provided that report. Is there a specific—

**Senator BILYK:** Well, you have said that the agencies had all been contacted. Are you able to tell me which specific agencies, including the national cultural institutions, have diversity and/or disability action plans in place?

**Ms Talbot:** That I do not actually have.

**Senator BILYK:** Can you take that on notice?

**Ms Talbot:** We can take that on notice.

**Senator BILYK:** For those who do not, what plans are there and what is the timing?

**Ms Talbot:** I have to take that on notice, Senator.

**Senator BILYK:** What about organisations that are funded by people such as the Australia Council, Creative Partnerships Australia and Screen Australia? I basically have the same questions to them. Which ones have diversity or disability action plans in place? For those that do not, what are the plans and timing around that?

**Ms O'Loughlin:** We can take that on notice for you.

...

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**Senator BILYK:** With regard to the question on notice and the diversity issues, can we also get a breakdown specifically for the arts area for gender diversity and everything else I asked for? I know you gave me whole-of-department staff, but could I get a breakdown for the arts area as well?

**Ms O'Loughlin:** Yes.

**Answer:**

**Q:** What steps are being taken to ensure that the membership of all boards and councils reflect diversity goals and have gender balance?

**A:** The Government takes into account the gender balance, diversity and regional representation of each Board and Council when considering potential appointees.

**Q:** Well, you have said that the agencies had all been contacted. Are you able to tell me which specific agencies, including the national cultural institutions, have diversity and/or disability action plans in place?

**A:** The Secretary of the Department of Communications and the Arts wrote to all portfolio agencies on 2 June 2016 advising of the government commitment to gender balance on government boards.

**Q:** About organisations that are funded by people such as the Australia Council, Creative Partnerships Australia and Screen Australia? I basically have the same questions to them. Which ones have diversity or disability action plans in place? For those that do not, what are the plans and timing around that?

**A:** To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

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**Q:** Are you able to tell me which specific agencies, including the national cultural institutions, have diversity and/or disability action plans in place? For those who do not, what plans are there and what is the timing?

**A:** See below.

**Arts Portfolio Agencies**

| <b>Agency</b>  | <b>diversity and/or disability action plans in place</b>  |
|--|---|
| Australian Film, Television and Radio School Council | Yes, AFTRS' Corporate Plan includes a section for Inclusion which outlines key activities such as a Student and Workforce Diversity Plan. The plan targets diversity across ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion and age.   |
| Screen Australia                                     | <p>Screen Australia has plans to develop a new diversity policy for employees, which will incorporate all areas of diversity including disability.</p> <p>Screen Australia supports diversity in the content and events it funds. Screen Australia supports The Other Film Festival, Australia's largest disability film festival, and the Access All Areas Travelling Film Festival, NSW's first fully accessible travelling film festival.</p> <p>Screen Australia's funding program guidelines include consideration of "the creation of a diverse slate of quality, innovative, original and culturally-significant story telling". Multiplatform funding also supports a huge range of culturally diverse talent. In addition, Screen Australia has a dedicated Indigenous department, which plays a fundamental role in ensuring that Indigenous Australians' stories are brought to life on screen.</p> <p>Screen Australia also requires that feature films it finances be captioned and audio described to provide access for the hearing and/or visually impaired, for cinemas and DVD. The agency also encourages producers of all non-feature film content to budget for captioning and audio description, and for accessible web or game design, to provide access to their projects for both hearing and visually impaired audiences. Screen Australia endeavours to make information easily accessible for all its stakeholders.</p> |
| Old Parliament House Board (Museum of                | Yes.  |

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| <b>Agency</b>                               | <b>diversity and/or disability<br/>action plans in place</b>  |
|---|---|
| Australian Democracy)                       |   |
| National Museum of Australia Council        | Yes.  |
| Australian National Maritime Museum Council | No. While the Australian National Maritime Museum does not have a disability action plan per se, it has a plan of action based on a comprehensive audit of disability access to the museum.   |
| National Library of Australia Council       | Yes.  |
| National Gallery of Australia Council       | <p>The National Gallery of Australia's Workplace Reasonable Adjustment Policy provides information for persons who have a disability or impairment, and workers who have a temporary illness or injury that is not covered by the provision of workers' compensation, which may impact on the inherent duties of their appointed position. The scope of the policy ensures that workers with a disability or impairment are not discriminated against or harassed in the workplace. This includes ensuring that there are no attitudinal or other barriers which result in less favourable treatment of workers with disabilities.</p> <p>The NGA continues to implement the strategies and provides an employee assistance program that includes a professional counselling service in the short term for a variety of work related and personal problems that may be affecting staff. It is committed to the principles of social justice and equity outlined in the Australian Government's Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society and promotes a culture of inclusion and consultation. In this spirit, the Gallery Consultative Committee provides a forum for staff to be heard by discussing workplace issues in a spirit of cooperation and trust.</p> |
| National Film and Sound Archive             | <p>The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia has had a Workplace Diversity Program in Place since 2011. The program covers diversity, including disability. The program will be reviewed in 2017.</p> <p>The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia Board Charter specifies that the Board will promote diversity across the agency.</p>   |
| National Portrait Gallery of Australia      | No. The National Portrait Gallery has a DRAFT Disability Access Action Plan which will be finalised for 2017 – 2019.  |

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| <b>Agency</b>     | <b>diversity and/or disability<br/>action plans in place</b>   |
|-------------------|--|
| Bundanon Trust    | Yes.   |
| Australia Council | <p>Yes. The Australia Council's Cultural Engagement Framework (CEF) is an overarching framework that guides the Council's vision, priorities and processes to recognise diversity, and ensure that arts funding and programs delivered by Council are inclusive and accessible. Under the CEF, the Council develops and implements a range of diversity strategies, including a Disability Action Plan (DAP) and Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).</p> <p>The Council prioritises diversity as a critical element of good governance across the arts sector, as set out in its guide to 'Essential governance practices for arts organisations' which recommends that leaders of arts organisations foster an organisational culture that embraces diversity. This includes having a diversity policy that reflects the communities that organisations engage with and establishing measurable objectives for achieving diversity.</p> |