

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
—Additional Estimates Hearing—24 February 2014**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services**

Topic: **The Queen's portrait**

Question: **154**

Hansard Page No **36**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 April 2014**

**Senator WONG:** The answer that was given is that the Parliament House curator offered to take a portrait off public display for display in the Prime Minister's reception. Is that correct?

**Ms Mills:** That, I would have to check directly with the person that—I am sorry Senator; I do not—

**Senator WONG:** Would you like me to repeat the question?

**Ms Mills:** No, I heard the question very clearly. The advice that I received was that, upon advice that it was in the public area, the Prime Minister's office did not wish to pursue that.

**Senator WONG:** The question goes on to say that the PM did not want to deny public access and so declined the offer. But I am interested in the assertion that in fact the curator offered to take a portrait off public display—is that not your understanding of what occurred?

**Ms Mills:** No, I do not know that we offered to do that, and that is what I will check. Again, it would not be unique to do that. Most of the artwork, other than that which is part of the original design of the building, does move. So it would not be unusual for our staff to offer to relocate a painting for the Prime Minister's office.

**Answer**

During DPS's standard offer of artworks from the Parliament House Art Collection, the Prime Minister's staff enquired if there was a painted portrait of Her Majesty the Queen in the Parliament House Art Collection that could be made available for display in the Prime Minister's Suite.

The DPS staff member advised the Prime Minister's staff that there was only one painting of Her Majesty the Queen in the Parliament House Art Collection and that it is on permanent public display in the Members' Hall as part of the Historic Memorials Collection display.

The DPS staff member did not offer to remove this work from display in the public area but advised the Prime Minister's staff that a copy of the Dargie portrait had recently been purchased by the National Museum of Australia and if approached, that the National Museum might be willing to lend their copy to the Prime Minister's Office.

The DPS staff member subsequently provided the contact details for the then Acting Director at the National Museum of Australia to enable the Prime Minister's staff to follow the matter up with the museum.