

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

**Group: 2**

**Program: 2.1**

**Question No. AE15/133**

**Senator Collins asked the following written question from the 24 February and 27 March 2015 hearings:**

1. What were the reasons for the formation of a stand-alone Book Council, replicating many of the functions of the Australia Council, at the same time as the government was abolishing some hundreds of other councils, committees and bodies on the grounds of duplication and excessive bureaucracy?
2. What are the functions of the Book Council, and how are they different from the Australia Council in the field of books and literature.
3. What consultations or representations took place from bodies outside government advocating the establishment of a book council?
4. When can we expect the membership of the Book Council to be announced?
5. What will be the staffing for the Book Council? How will those staff be selected? Where will the Council be physically located?
6. What consultation took place with the Australia Council prior to the announcement of the Book Council, particularly regarding its functions and funding?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

1. This is a matter for government.
2. The Book Council of Australia (the Book Council) will provide advice to the Government on strategies to raise and strengthen the profile of Australian books and writing nationally and internationally. The Australia Council is the Australian Government's principal arts funding body. It supports the excellence, diversity and vitality of Australian literature through a primary focus on the creation of new work funded through direct grants to writers.
3. Book industry advisory bodies have previously recommended the value of establishing a book sector council. The department has also consulted a range of representatives from the book sector.
4. The membership of the Book Council is expected to be announced shortly.
5. The Book Council will be an advisory body which will be supported by a secretariat within the Ministry for the Arts.
6. Australia Council was informed of the Government's decision prior to the announcement of the Book Council of Australia.