

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

Group: 2

Program: Other Agency

Question No. AE15/143

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

1. Were you consulted about the establishment of the Book Council before it was announced by the Prime Minister?
2. From what parts of the Australia Council budget will the \$6m funding for the Book Council be taken? What functions or services will now not be undertaken as a result of that \$6m cut to your budget?
3. Given that the Council previously had, and presumably still has, responsibility for literature as an important part of Australian culture, what parts of that responsibility will the council relinquish to the new Book Council? Alternatively, how will it manage duplications of responsibilities?

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

1. The Australia Council was informed of the Government's decision prior to the announcement of the Book Council of Australia.
2. The reduction is taken from the Australia Council's overall budget. Planning for the 2015/16 financial year is currently underway.
3. The Council has Literature Peer Assessment Panels, a Chair of Literature and Director of Literature, and will continue to support writers and the literary sector through the grants program and strategic activities. The Ministry for the Arts is currently in discussions with the Australia Council regarding the activities of the Book Council.