

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

**Group: Written**

**Program: 2.1**

**Question: BE14/076**

**Senator Singh asked the following questions at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:**

1. Ms Daniele Kemp, a member of the Ballet School board, is quoted as saying the ballet school applied for a grant. Under what program was that grant application made? How much funding was requested? When was the application submitted?
2. What specifications for a residence were included in the application? What was the suggested cost of a proposed residence? What money did the School have in hand or promised prior to the application?
3. Ms Kemp is quoted as saying Minister Brandis met with the board when this proposal was discussed. When did this meeting take place? Who initiated the meeting – the Minister, the Ministry, or the school?
4. What advice did the Ministry provide to the Minister about the proposal for a residence for the school, in the context of the 2014 budget? When was that advice provided?
5. What was the Minister's response to that advice, and when was it provided?
6. When was the property in The Avenue, Parkville, identified as being suitable for purchase by the school?
7. Who was the previous owner of the property?
8. When is the settlement date of the sale/purchase of the property? What are the terms of the sale, in relation to payment of the purchase price? What stamp duty is payable to the State government on the purchase?
9. What corporate entity will be the owner of the property?
10. Does the school own the premises in which it operates in Southbank? If not, who owns the property? If it does not own the property, how much rent is paid?
11. What renovations and modifications to the Parkville house will be required to suit the needs of the school? What is the budgeted cost of those modifications? What funds does the school have in hand to meet those costs?
12. What discussions with the School have taken place or representations from the school have been received by the Minister or the Ministry about the need for a residence, prior to the Budget announcement?
13. What representations has the ministry or the minister received, apart from the school itself, about the need for a residence?

14. What is the budgeted cost for ongoing maintenance and running of the residence? What residential fees are intended to be charged to students? Where will any shortfall in funding of running costs be sourced?

15. What is the annual cost of rates payable to Melbourne City Council for the Parkville property?

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

1. The Australian Ballet School (the School) has been seeking government support for the purchase of a student residence from successive governments for many years. In September 2013, Commissioner Leigh Johns, Chair of the Australian Ballet School board wrote to Senator the Hon George Brandis QC seeking a one-off contribution from the Australian Government toward the purchase of a student residence. The contribution of \$1 million announced in the 2014-15 Budget will be provided under Outcome 2 of the Portfolio Budget Statements for the Attorney-General's Department in relation to arts and cultural development which supports "participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture through developing and supporting cultural expression".

2. In September 2013, the School identified its aim to secure a residence to accommodate 40 young students that was close to public transport to ensure it was safely and easily accessible to the School's training facility. Having considered a number of properties, the School suggested appropriate East Melbourne properties were being quoted at between \$6.5 million and \$10 million. At this time, the School identified a significant private donation of \$1 million had been made and a further \$2.5 million was available to support the purchase of a property.

3. The Minister met with members of the Australian Ballet School board on 6 February 2014 during a tour of the School.

4. It is not appropriate to comment on advice to ministers.

5. It is not appropriate to comment on advice to ministers.

6. Not known.

7. Not known.

8. Not known.

9. It is understood that the Australian Ballet School will be the owner of the Parkville property.

10. No, the Australian Ballet School does not own the premises at Southbank. It leases training space at the Australian Ballet Centre (2 Kavanagh St, Southbank, Victoria) from Australian Ballet Development Pty Ltd. Please refer to the Australian Ballet's published annual report for details regarding rental revenue from its Southbank property.

11. The Parkville property will require some refurbishment to ensure the property is fit for the purpose of supervising and accommodating a resident group of young people. The School has not yet advised its formal budget for these works. The works will be funded through the School's broader fundraising campaign for the residency.

12. The Australian Ballet School has been seeking government support for a student residence from successive governments for many years and has written a number of times to government ministers.

13. The Minister has received a number of letters of support from the community supporting the School's need for a student residence.

14. Not known at this stage. However, the School's latest financial report is available through the Australian Securities & Investments Commission's Connect website.

15. Not known.