

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

Group 2

Program: 2.1

Question No. BE15/004

Senator Bilyk asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2015:

Senator BILYK: I would like to know if any of these appointments were considered by cabinet.

Senator Brandis: Yes, all.

Senator BILYK: Who identified the appointees as potential candidates for appointment?

Senator Brandis: They were identified by a process of discussion between me and my advisers and me and the relevant officials. The way this process works—if you want to know—is that, having identified—

Senator BILYK: Is the department involved?

Senator Brandis: I discussed these appointments with the department, yes. What happens is that, having settled upon an appropriate candidate, I write to the Prime Minister. This is a standard procedure in our government. I write to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's office considers my recommendation, and it then goes to cabinet, and the cabinet either endorses it or does not. I think it is fair to say that all of my recommendations so far have been endorsed by cabinet.

Senator BILYK: So the Prime Minister was briefed on these appointments?

Senator Brandis: I just told you I wrote to the Prime Minister.

Senator BILYK: You might have to take this on notice, but I would like to know the dates that he was briefed on these appointments.

Senator Brandis: You say 'briefed'. I wrote—the standard procedure—

Senator BILYK: Okay, can you find out the dates of those letters that you wrote.

Senator Brandis: You want me to tell you the dates on which, in respect of each of the four people you have named, I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister recommending that person?

Senator BILYK: Yes, please.

Senator Brandis: Okay, I can do that.

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

The Minister for the Arts wrote to the Prime Minister seeking his, or at his discretion the Cabinet's agreement to these four proposed appointments. In three cases these appointments

were later made by the Governor-General at Federal Executive Council, and in the other by the Minister for the Arts.

	<i>Recommended appointment</i>	<i>Date of letter from Minister for the Arts to the Prime Minister</i>	<i>Date approved by the Governor-General</i>
Dr Janet Albrechtsen	Member, Council of the National Museum of Australia	28 July 2014	11 December 2014
The Hon Ian Campbell	Member, Council of the Australian National Maritime Museum	6 November 2014	11 December 2014
The Hon Peter Collins AM RFD QC	Member, Council of the Australian National Maritime Museum	28 November 2014	11 December 2014
Mr Paul Neville	Member, Board of the National Film and Sound Archive	6 November 2014	Not applicable ⁱ

These four appointments and one other appointment were announced by the Minister for the Arts on 11 December 2014.

ⁱ As required by the *National Film and Sound Archive Act 2008*, appointments to that Board are made by the Minister. Mr Neville's appointment was made by the Minister for the Arts on 1 December 2014, having been earlier considered and approved by the Cabinet.