



Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Ed Cocks MLA on 17 November 2023: Mr Ben Ponton took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 17 November 2023, pages 26-27

In relation to: Heritage grants

MR COCKS: But I am still very interested to know whether that funding is judged and awarded under the same conditions that nominations for other projects are subject to.

Ms Vassarotti: I am struggling a little bit to understand the nature of the question. The support for the heritage funding is actually, you know, a fairly standard process that happens within government. I recognise there is potentially some confusion in terms of the fact that it is represented at—you know, the presentation uses the language of a grant and again, we might need to take a little bit of—we might need to take some of that on notice.

MR COCKS: So maybe I can—

Ms Vassarotti: Like, it is a standard activity that has been conducted by government over a number of years to support a really important festival.

MR COCKS: Yes, I am well aware of that. My question, if I can make it as simple as I can, I assume that most of the projects here, there is an application process that is assessed by the government and a decision is made about awarding that funding. Does the same process and the same condition apply to this \$120,000 amount?

Ms Vassarotti: No, except there are components of it such as I know there is an—you know, like, that we commission artwork, we commission, you know, advertising that goes through the standard procurement processes. Again, I might move to officials.

Mr Burkevics: Yes, thanks minister. And as the minister indicated, if there is further information that we need to provide on notice we are happy to do so. I think it is important to say that there are three programs, three criteria under the Heritage Grants Program. The Heritage Festival is under the large scale events program. The circumstances of how, I think, a limited number of applications are assessed,

we can provide further information, but I think it is important to note that the Heritage Festival is about supporting community groups and promoting the work that they do in support of heritage in the ACT.

So the Heritage Festival was cancelled for one year during COVID. We have seen an increase in interest in the Heritage Festival thanks to good advocacy as well. So that may explain why there has been a growth for that year because we have seen so much greater interest and willingness to participate and as a result, a demand on resources for the Heritage Festival.

Mr Ponton: I, perhaps minister, could just add. Ben Ponton, Director-General Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. There is also a distinction between a partnership grant and a community grant, so I think the best solution here is for us to, as we said, take on notice the detail of the question and we will come back and we will step out the difference between the partnership, community and the criteria and processes for you, Mr Cocks.

MR COCKS: Okay, well that would be useful. Perhaps you can also provide on notice the list of recipients of the different categories of funding.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

MR COCKS: It looks like this only goes into one grouping, one category, in the annual report currently.

Mr Ponton: We can take that on notice.

MR COCKS: Thank you.

Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The Grants Program Guidelines provide information on the types of grants available, including the distinction between partnership and community grant, and the funding priorities. The Guidelines can be seen at: https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1950799/ACT-Heritage-Grants-Program-Guidelines-for-Applications-2023-2024.pdf

Criteria has been established to guide how funding is allocated for Community Heritage Partnership Projects (CHPP). The funding for the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival has been provided under CHPP funding criterion 3: Large scale projects and events that involve a high level of community participation and/or management with no one stakeholder able to manage the project effectively.

A review of the most appropriate funding source for the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival will be undertaken. Should advice be provided that the Festival expenditure should come from another source, this will be considered in the 2023-24 financial year.

All grant applications for individual or community group projects that met the criteria for 2023-24 were funded. A breakdown of the heritage grant projects that are funded for the 2023-24 financial year can be seen at: <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage/heritage-grants/successful-projects-for-2023-2024>

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature: 

Date: 24/11/2023

By the Minister for Heritage, Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA