

Question on notice no. 596

Portfolio question number: 2

2023-24 Budget estimates

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Defence Portfolio

Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan: asked the Australian War Memorial on 31 May 2023—

Senator CANAVAN: Moving on further in the minutes, the minutes from meeting 179 on 10 November contain an attachment titled '8C, Summary of key achievements since the last meeting'. On page 11 of that attachment it describes some media activity, and I quote: 'The focus in this quarter with proactive media included department coverage, Indigenous research, numerous commemorations in development, and media announcements involving the minister regarding geothermal technology and increased frontier violence depiction.' Did either of those two announcements relate to the memory of people who served in the Australian military? My point here is that your proactive media seems to be focused on two issues, geothermal technology and increased frontier violence depiction, which didn't actually relate to serving members of the Australian defence forces, which I would have thought would be your central, primary objective as the Australian War Memorial.

Mr Anderson: The public programs of the Australia War Memorial deal with those who serve, suffer and die on a daily basis—on a daily basis. But, for this briefing, which is a standard activity for the Australian War Memorial every single day—I think in briefings to council we look at the additional things that we do. In this case—

Senator CANAVAN: Just to be clear, it's not briefing to council—well, the briefing to council, but what I'm asking about is the reason for your proactive media to be about these two issues, not serving defence force personnel.

Mr Anderson: I think the proactive media on this one actually related to the fact that it was a press conference that was called specifically for the announcement of the geothermal for the development of the Australian War Memorial, an important part of the development project. And it was at that media conference where the former chairman, Dr Nelson, was asked a question about the depiction of frontier violence in the new galleries. It was in that context. I think it's probably misleading to say it was 'proactive'. It was in response to a question at a press conference which was proactive around geothermal.

Senator CANAVAN: Well, the word 'proactive' was not mine; it's in your minutes. Is it that the minutes were misleading?

Mr Anderson: In that sense, yes. It was a response to a question.

Senator CANAVAN: Okay. Did the minister or the minister's office receive, provide or edit any words associated with this for the proactive media regarding the frontier violence?

Mr Anderson: No.

Senator CANAVAN: Also in those minutes on page 12 it says, 'The chairman's answer to a question on frontier violence during the geothermal launch had a potential audience reach of 621,267, with the sentiment at 99.1 per cent positive or neutral.' How were those figures calculated?

Ms Bennie: The Australian War Memorial, like a lot of companies and agencies, uses a media monitoring service, and that media monitoring service obviously scans mastheads and broader media. You may be aware of it, Senator. Through that, there are sentiment measures as well as looking at the amount of coverage that the particular article achieved across media, TV radio, print et cetera.

Senator CANAVAN: Is 'positive or neutral' based on the media reports?

Ms Bennie: Yes, it is.

Senator CANAVAN: That's not a public reaction.

Ms Bennie: No. There is no survey result that went along with that at all.

Senator CANAVAN: It's an interpretation-

Ms Bennie: That's right.

Senator CANAVAN: of what the headline or the article said, or the transcript.

Ms Bennie: That's right.

Senator CANAVAN: Can you provide, on notice, what the positive sentiments were, what the neutral

sentiments were, and what the negative ones were? Could you break it up like that?

Yes? Okay.

Answer —

Answer attached.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Budget Estimates 2023-24 – 31 May 2023
Answers to questions on notice from the Veterans' Affairs portfolio

Question 2

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Council Minutes - Meeting 179 - 10 November 2022 - media coverage

(Written Question on Notice) or (FADT Hansard Proof 31 May 2023, p 111)

Senator Matthew Canavan asked:

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Senator CANAVAN: Can you provide, on notice, what the positive sentiments were, what the neutral sentiments were, and what the negative ones were? Could you break it up like that? Yes? Okay.

Answer

The Australian War Memorial engages service provider Isentia for media monitoring and reporting.

During the two days following the Geothermal Media Conference (Thursday 29 September and Friday 30 September 2023) there were 109 media mentions. Isentia captured the following sentiment statistics based on the 109 mentions:

- 81.8% of coverage was reported as neutral
- 17.3% of coverage was reported as positive
- 0.9% of coverage was reported as negative