

**Opening statement of National Library of Ireland for PAC meeting on 29 January 2015.**

In August 2013 NLI staff discovered the loss of items from the collections, reporting the matter immediately to the Gardaí, the Library Board, and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Detectives from the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation subsequently recovered a significant number of items believed to have been stolen. In November 2013, the media reported the arrest of a Library employee in connection with the theft of material.

The matter is still under investigation by the Gardaí. We are not in a position therefore to provide any further information lest it prejudice that investigation.

The NLI took immediate steps to enhance security. For obvious security reasons it would be ill advised for us to disclose publicly specific details of these steps. However, I would be happy to provide any members of the PAC with a tour and overview of NLI storage areas.

The NLI requested both the Garda Crime Prevention Unit and two internationally recognised library security experts to conduct security reviews. The NLI's Board and management have reviewed the resulting reports, and submitted these to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Office of Public Works.

In relation to the studentships, in 2010 it was decided to run a Special Studentship Programme to be paid from the Annual Grant. This built on the success of an existing studentship programme dating from 1998 and financed from 'own resources.'

The NLI did not believe that discrete sanction was required from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for interns appointed under the Programme in 2011-2012. DAHG advised the NLI in September 2010 that as the studentship programme "did not constitute recruitment, promotion or an acting appointment to a management or administrative grade or to any other grade within the public sector", and as the Programme for Government included a commitment to promote internships, the programme could not be opposed.

The Studentships ran through 2011 to 2012 and provided professional developmental opportunities in Catalogue and Software Development, Digital Collections, Reference Services, Manuscripts, Outreach and Marketing.

7 Studentships (at €17,100 per annum) were advertised in each of 2010 and 2011 and 1 in 2012. 310 applications were received in all, and 15 Studentships awarded, with periods of service varying from 3 to 17 months.

The aim of the Studentship programme was to resource additional library projects which did not fall within normal job descriptions and to provide excellent career enhancement experience for the Studentship holders, all of whom, we understand, went on to secure employment. The cost of the Special Studentships Programme in 2012 was €113,662 which represents excellent value for the public funding allocated to it by the Library.

All studentships and internships have had DAHG approval since 1st January 2013.