

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

**Group: 2**

**Program 1.8**

**Question No. SBE14/179**

**Senator Collins asked the following written question from the 20 November and 11 December 2014 hearings.**

Noting that the Australian Government Solicitor's (AGS) fees have already partially been reported on Austender and are therefore a matter of public record (Attachment D and E):

1. Noting the contracts with the Australian Government Solicitor, what legal works was provided by the AGS?
2. Was this work not able to be done by Minter Ellison?
3. Was there a need to engage the AGS in legal work for the TURC?
4. Who made the decision to give work to the AGS?
5. Was the decision considered by Cabinet?
6. Who approved the decision?
7. Was the Minister or his office briefed on this decision?
  - a) If so, on what date(s)?
8. Was the Prime Minister or his office briefed on this decision?
  - a) If so, on what date(s)?
9. Was the appointment recommended by the bureaucracy?
10. Was Minter Ellison aware of legal work being given to the AGS?
11. Considering the Abbott Government's decision to abolish the AGS, who will now be providing legal work previously done by the AGS?
  - a) Will this result in further spending on the TURC?

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

Attachments D and E to this question relate to separate legal services.

In relation to Attachment D:

1. Specialist legal services relating to work tied to AGS under the *Legal Services Directions 2005*.
2. No, see answer to Question 1.
3. Yes. Refer to Questions 1 and 2 above.

4. The Office of the Royal Commission.
5. No
6. CEO, the Office of the Royal Commission.
7. No
8. No
9. Yes, the Office of the Royal Commission.
10. Yes
11. AGS is not being abolished. It is being consolidated within the Attorney-General's Department. The consolidation of AGS into the Department will not have any impact on the legal services provided by AGS to the Department in relation to the TURC.
  - a. No

In relation to Attachment E:

- 1-3. The Australian Government Solicitor provided legal services to the Commonwealth through the Attorney-General's Department. The services related to the Royal Commission into the Trade Union Governance and Corruption but were not provided to the Commission itself.
4. An SES Band 1 officer in the Attorney-General's Department.
5. No.
6. An SES Band 1 officer in the Attorney-General's Department.
7. Yes.
  - a. On 5 September 2014.
8. No.
9. AGS was engaged by the Attorney-General's Department.
10. Yes.
11. AGS is not being abolished. It is being consolidated within the Attorney-General's Department. The consolidation of AGS into the Department will not have any impact on the legal services provided by AGS to the Department in relation to the TURC.
  - a. No.