

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

**Agency - Fair Work Australia**

**DEEWR Question No. EW0161\_13**

**Senator Abetz asked on 28 May 2012 , Hansard page 30**

**Question**

**FWA - Cost of HSU inquiries**

Senator ABETZ: What a good idea. We were told continually that, based on legal advice, you could not cooperate with the police. Can you tell us, please, how much the advice of the Australian Government Solicitor dated 22 March 2012 cost? Ms O'Neill: I would have to take that on notice. Senator ABETZ: If you would, please. While you are at it, can you tell us how much Fair Work Australia has now spent on the two Health Services Union inquiries, both with the Australian Government Solicitor and also with private providers? Ms O'Neill: I can. The total cost in relation to the HSU investigations to 30 April 2012, so this is over the course of the investigation, is \$1,309,722. Senator ABETZ: And what about private providers? Ms O'Neill: That is the total in relation to the investigation. Senator ABETZ: That is for both private and AGS? Ms O'Neill: Yes. Senator ABETZ: On notice, can you split that up if you can? We do not need to know that now.

**Answer**

*Fair Work Australia has provided the following response:*

The cost of the advice provided by the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) in relation to FWA's power to refer matters to the police dated 22 March 2012 was included in invoices for a range of matters. Based on a manual calculation of the itemised invoices, the cost of the advice was \$30 315.

As at 30 April 2012 the external legal costs incurred in the conduct of the two investigations since their initiation totalled \$1,309,722 excluding GST. This total comprises AGS fees of \$1,279,907 and other external provider fees of \$29,815.