

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

**Portfolio**

**Question No. 142**

**Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:**

Briefings for the Australian Greens and Independents

- 1) Have any briefings been provided to the Australian Greens? If yes, please include:
  - a) How are briefings requests commissioned?
  - b) What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
  - c) Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information.
  - d) Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provided details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
  - e) How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings for the Australian Greens? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.
- 2) Have any briefings and/or provision of information been provided to Independents? If yes, please include:
  - a) How are briefings requests commissioned?
  - b) What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
  - c) Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information.
  - d) Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provided details of what the requests were and why it could not proceed.
  - e) How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings/information requests for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.
  - f) Which Independents have requested briefings and/or information?

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

This reply excludes information or work such as responding to Freedom of Information requests, processing ministerial correspondence, or preparing answers to questions on notice submitted by Australian Greens or Independent members of Parliament. It also excludes briefings that may have been given to Australian Greens or Independent members of Parliament in their capacity as members of a Parliamentary Committee. Additionally, the reply excludes normal legislative briefings as outlined in the 2010 parliamentary agreement between the government and the Australian Greens and the independent members for New England and Lyne.

Responses covering the time period to 1 September 2012 can be found in Question on Notice 133 from the 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates round.

The following portfolio agencies indicated that they did not provide briefings to the Independents, or Australian Greens between 1 October 2012 and 31 January 2013:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Australian Crime Commission, Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, Australian Federal Police, Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Law Reform Commission, Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, CrimTrac, Customs and Border Protection Service, Family Court of Australia, Family Magistrates Court of Australia, Federal Court of Australia, Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

See below for further responses.

#### **Attorney-General's Department**

- a) A verbal briefing was requested by Senator Hanson-Young through the Attorney-General's Office.
- b) 17 January 2013 – Verbal briefing on issues related to the work of the Independent Reviewer of Adverse Security Assessments. No written material was provided.
- c) See response to part b)
- d) No.
- e) Around 3 hours for an EL1/SLO.

#### **Australian Government Solicitor**

Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) is a government business enterprise operating on a commercial and competitive basis in providing legal and related services to government and its agencies. AGS does not receive any Budget or other appropriations and its employees are engaged outside of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The question is therefore not applicable to AGS.

#### **Australian Institute of Criminology**

The AIC does not usually provide briefings to Parliamentarians; however the Director has met with the Greens to discuss the issue of Justice Reinvestment.

#### **Australian Security Intelligence Organisation**

It is not appropriate to provide details of briefings provided by ASIO to Parliamentarians. Where briefings are provided, ASIO routinely informs the Attorney-General of the nature and extent of these briefings.