

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

Question No. 77

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 21 February 2013:

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) budget statement includes an amount of \$4.775m per year, part of which is described as “accommodation and shared services under a memorandum of understanding” with the OAIC.

- 1) Would you please outline the terms of the MoU and the nature of the accommodation and shared services with the AHRC.
- 2) Are these terms commercially competitive? Have alternatives to these arrangements been explored?

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

- 1) The MoU covers the provision of some corporate services to the OAIC. This includes financial, information technology and human resources services. The AHRC has provided these services since the establishment of the former Office of the Privacy Commissioner as a separate agency in 2000. These arrangements continued following the establishment of the OAIC. In 2011–12, the OAIC paid the AHRC \$977,809 (excluding GST) for these services. The term of the current MoU is from 1 November 2010 to 30 June 2014.

The OAIC also subleases its premises in Sydney from the AHRC and the AHRC provides building management services for these premises. The term of the lease/sublease is 10 years, expiring 30 June 2021. In 2011–12, the OAIC paid the AHRC \$841,310 (excluding GST) for its area of occupancy and use.

- 2) The OAIC and the AHRC have recently participated in the assessment of a shared services offer from the Attorney-General’s Department. That assessment showed that the services offered by the Department would be more expensive than those provided under the MoU.

The *Strategic Review of Small and Medium Agencies in the Attorney-General’s portfolio* recommended that the OAIC should negotiate appropriate service levels for inclusion in the current MoU. The OAIC and the AHRC are currently developing these service standards.