

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

Sub Program 1.2.1

Question No. 152

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2009:

In relation to the Attorney-General's Department receiving \$9.6 million over two years to co-ordinate federal involvement in the Victorian bushfires royal commission;

- a) Please detail what activities or initiatives will be undertaken and provide more detail on the extent of the involvement and which Government officials will be involved.
- b) Is the funding adequate for the Department to perform this role?
- c) Will input from Commonwealth public servants be censured by Attorney-General's Department?

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

- a) The Attorney-General's Department is coordinating the Commonwealth's involvement in the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. This includes:
 - monitoring proceedings in the Royal Commission
 - responding to summonses/requests served on the Commonwealth by the Commission
 - facilitating the attendance of Commonwealth officials at the Commission,
 - instructing Counsel representing the Commonwealth; and
 - coordinating submissions made by the Commonwealth to the Commission.

The Commonwealth has been requested (in some cases by way of summons) to provide documents to the Commission and to make witnesses available for examination by the Commission. In particular, officials from the Bureau of Meteorology and Emergency Management Australia have attended and provided evidence to the Commission. The Commission has also requested officers from Centrelink and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research to attend and provide evidence to the Commission.

b) Yes.

c) No.