

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

Question No. 32

Senator Edwards asked the following question at the hearing on 18 November 2013:

Senator EDWARDS: ...What is the net cost to you by virtue of the Chifley Centre project being off-schedule? What is the cost of your remaining at Russell Hill that the taxpayers of Australia are incurring by virtue of the inefficiency of the Department of Finance in the previous government's regime?

Mr Irvine: I have no idea what that figure would be. We would need to work it out. But I am not sure that your assumption that the cost to ASIO of this delay is in fact a cost to our budget. In fact it may well be quite the reverse, because the building will be more expensive than the ones we are in.

Senator EDWARDS: There is an accounting term called fully absorbed cost. Has anybody in ASIO done an audit to see what it is, if there is a cost of this project running over and above what it is costing us out of the Department of Finance?

Mr Irvine: I will take that on notice, because I simply do not know the answer.

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

ASIO has not completed a financial audit of the 'fully absorbed' cost in respect of the delay to the Ben Chifley building.

ASIO is paying lease and utility costs for its Canberra premises that are being offset by rent appropriated for the Ben Chifley building.