



22 October 2012

**Australian Government Solicitor**

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Senator Trish Crossin

Chair

Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Canberra  
Sydney  
Melbourne  
Brisbane  
Perth  
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Dear Senator

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-13 – Australian Government Solicitor**

On 16 October 2012, the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) appeared before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee in relation to the 2012-13 Supplementary Budget Estimates. I would like to clarify one aspect of my evidence regarding the number of lawyers working on the matter relating to the Federal Court proceeding brought by Mr James Ashby against the Commonwealth and Mr Peter Slipper.

I informed the Committee that 17 lawyers in AGS (excluding paralegals and graduates) had worked on this matter. In fact, that number referred to the lawyers whose time had been billed as at the date of the hearing. Since the last bill was issued, an additional 4 AGS lawyers have recorded a small amount of time to the matter.

It may assist the Committee to know that over 90% of the work was performed by only 4 lawyers.

Other than those 4 lawyers, most of the lawyers performed a very small amount of work on the matter. In particular, 5 lawyers spent 24 minutes or less working on the matter and an additional 6 lawyers performed less than 3.5 hours work. Most of these lawyers were performing ad hoc tasks that needed to be done quickly by whoever had capacity to perform the work, or whoever was in the relevant physical location at the time (noting that the judge handling the matter was in Sydney, counsel were in Melbourne and the lawyers with carriage of the matter were in Canberra). In addition some senior practitioners were consulted on discrete issues in their area of expertise.

Yours sincerely

**Ian Govey**

Chief Executive Officer