

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2021 - 2022

Attorney-General's Department
LCC-AE22-064 - AHRC funding deficit

Senator Mehreen Faruqi asked the following question on 24 February 2022:

1. According to the 2021-22 Auditor General Report the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is currently experiencing a serious funding deficit. The Commission's net liability position as at 30 June 2021 was \$5.4 million. This funding deficit appears to have begun after a change of funding arrangements in 2018 when the Commission's funding began being received through grants from the Attorney-General's Department. Why has the Attorney-General's Department allowed the AHRC to run on such a deficit. Furthermore, does the Department have any plans to provide greater funding to the AHRC into the future in order to cover this deficit?

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

The Government has provided an equity injection of \$16 million to assist the Commission to address the cash flow problem it is currently experiencing and return it to a sustainable financial footing.

The appropriation of the Commission to perform its core functions has been more or less steady over recent years. The Commission also receives additional funding to undertake work on specific projects.

The Attorney-General's Department and Department of Finance have been working with the Commission to assist the Commission to identify ways in which it can return to budget. Funding for the Commission is considered as part of budget processes.