

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

**Group 2**

**Program 1.3**

**Question No. 147**

**Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2014:**

- 1) Prior to being abolished, what was the role of the International Legal Services Advisory Council?
- 2) Do you view/does the government view exporting legal services as an important priority when negotiating free trade agreements with other countries?
- 3) On what basis was the International Legal Services Advisory Council disbanded?
- 4) Was advice sought about the axing of the advisory council? If so, who gave it?
- 5) What advice was given about axing the advisory council?
- 6) Was a review of the work of the advisory council done?
- 7) What was the outcome of that review?
- 8) Why were members of the ILSAC not notified that their Council was being axed prior to a public announcement being made?
- 9) It has been publicised as an efficiency measure with the task being given to the Law Council of Australia, Council of Law Deans and International Arbitration Groups, how will these groups be compensated for the extra workload?
- 10) As the members of ILSAC were volunteers how much has the axing of this service saved?

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

- 1) ILSAC's mission was to enhance the international presence and improve the international performance of Australia's legal and related services.
- 2) Trade in legal services is and will continue to be a part of Australian free trade agreements. Government will continue to consult with the legal sector on their interests internationally.
- 3) ILSAC was abolished on 8 November 2013 as part of the rationalisation of a number of non-statutory bodies. This was a whole-of-government decision, taken to simplify and streamline the business of government.
- 4) See answer to Question 3.
- 5) See answer to Question 3.
- 6) See answer to Question 3.
- 7) See answer to Question 3.
- 8) ILSAC was contacted on 8 November 2013 to inform ILSAC of government's decision.

9) These bodies have led many ILSAC initiatives in recent years and have increasingly engaged with government in an advisory capacity.

10) The rationalisation of ILSAC will provide modest savings, largely through travel, hospitality and secretariat costs.