

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

**Group: 2**

**Program: 1.8**

**Question No. AE15/094**

**Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 27 March 2015:**

Ms Fitzgerald: Minter Ellison are the solicitors assisting the trade union royal commission. I am happy to go into detail about what that role entails if you would like me to.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Yes, please.

Ms Fitzgerald: They are providing the solicitor support to the counsel assisting and to the royal commissioner in the meeting of the requirements of the terms of reference in relation to the royal commission. They were engaged at the beginning of the royal commission and worked with counsel assisting and the royal commissioner, and indeed, from my own experience, the office of the royal commission very successfully throughout the course of 2014. Their contract was extended with the extension of the trade union royal commission.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Did the extension of that contract involve a recalibration of the maximum amount?

Ms Fitzgerald: I am not entirely sure what your question is. Sorry.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: What has been put on AusTender here refers to the \$17 million. Was there a different amount that was then adjusted because of the extension of the contract?

Ms Fitzgerald: To my knowledge, there have been three different adjustments to the figure. The first figure that was there was only in relation to the 2013-14 financial year. The figure was subsequently adjusted to take into account the 2014-15 financial year. Obviously, with the extension of the trade union royal commission and thereby the extension of the contract in relation to Minter Ellison, another extension of that AusTender contract documentation was required.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: And this is the final one, from what you were saying earlier?

Ms Fitzgerald: Unless, of course, the figures need to be adjusted.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: What were the earlier figures?

Ms Fitzgerald: I do not have those figures at my fingertips. I would be able to get them. They are publicly available on the AusTender website too. From my recollection—and it is only my recollection—the initial figure was around \$2 million. The subsequent figure was around \$7 million. And I think the third figure is around \$16 million. I am happy to confirm those figures if you would like me to.

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

The amount that is published on Austender in relation to the original contract with Minter Ellison is \$2,030,727 (this amount relates to work carried out in the 2013/2014 financial year). The contract was amended to take into account work up until 31 December 2014 and the amount published on Austender was amended to \$7,948,727. Following the extension of the Royal Commission the contract was amended for a second time and accordingly the amount published on Austender was amended to \$16,998,427.