

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

Portfolio

Question No. 150

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2012:

Does the department/agency provide any information and/or undertake any requests for the **Australian Greens**? If yes, please provide the following information:

- a) How is such work and/or information requests commissioned?
- b) What work/information requests have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each work produced.
- c) Has any such work and/or information requests been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details including what the work and/or information requests were and why it could not be undertaken.
- d) How long is spent undertaking work and/or information requests for the Australian Greens? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

Does the department/agency provide any information and/or undertake any requests for **the Independents**? If yes, please provide the following information:

- e) How is such work and/or information requests commissioned?
- f) What work/information requests have been undertaken? Provide details, including who the work/information was for and a copy of each work produced.
- g) Has any such work and/or information requests been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details including what the work and/or information requests were, who they were from, who they were for and why it could not be undertaken.
- h) How long is spent undertaken work and/or information requests for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

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

In its agreement with the Independent Members and the Australian Greens following the 2010 election, the Government agreed to discuss upcoming legislation with members of the Cross-Bench, and provide them an opportunity to be further briefed ahead of the introduction of proposed legislation. The Department has undertaken such briefings on a number of occasions since these Agreements were made.

Briefings have been given to Australian Greens or Independent Members of Parliament in their capacity as members of a Parliamentary Committee.

The Attorney-General's Department and portfolio agencies also provide routine information when responding to Freedom of Information requests, replying to ministerial correspondence, or preparing answers to questions on notice submitted by Australian Greens, Independent and other members of Parliament as required.

It is not appropriate to provide details of briefings provided by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) to Parliamentarians. Where briefings are provided, ASIO routinely informs the Attorney-General of the nature and extent of these briefings.