

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

Group: 2

Program: 1.3

Question: BE14/084

Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:

1. Please confirm that the Ombudsman will be given new responsibilities announced in the Budget but will not receive any additional funding?
2. Was the office of the Ombudsman consulted about the new functions being conferred on it in the Budget?
3. What additional resources will the Ombudsman need to fulfil the responsibilities that up until now have been handled by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner?
4. What will the consequences be for the Commonwealth Ombudsman of fulfilling these functions without additional resources?
5. Will other services provided by the Ombudsman be impacted?

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

- (1) The Government announced in the 2014-15 Budget that, given the abolition of the OAIC, responsibility for handling (FOI) complaints will again lie solely with the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- (2) The Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department indicated at the hearing on 29 May that he had engaged in discussions with the Commonwealth Ombudsman concerning matters related to the duplication of the operations of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- (3) This is a matter for the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- (4) This is a matter for the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- (5) This is a matter for the Commonwealth Ombudsman.