

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

**Group: 2**

**Program: 1.9**

**Question No. BE15/011**

**Senator Bilyk asked the following question at the hearing on 27 and 28 May 2015:**

Senator BILYK: So was it in accordance with an established scale relied upon by the Commonwealth to remunerate royal commissioners?

Senator Brandis: It was arrived at in accordance with the appropriate procedures adopted by the Commonwealth for the remuneration of counsel, yes.

Senator BILYK: But I cannot find out those procedures. Is it consistent then with, say, that of the commissioner presiding over the royal commission into institution responses to child sexual abuse?

Senator Brandis: There are six of them and they are remunerated, I think, on a somewhat different basis. Do not hold me to this. I will have it checked but my understanding was that each of them is paid the equivalent salary of a Federal Court judge.

Senator BILYK: So is his payment consistent with commissioners presiding over previous commissions of inquiry for the Commonwealth?

Senator Brandis: Whose payment?

Senator BILYK: Mr Heydon's.

Senator Brandis: I would need to check. Certainly the principles on which he is remunerated are consistent. Whether previous royal commissioners were paid the same fee or a higher fee or a lower fee, I would have to check.

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

The appointment of Commissioners is a matter for Government. The remuneration paid to a commissioner, including Mr Heydon QC, is commensurate with the nature of the commission as well as the particular commissioner's skills and experience. The government has consistently followed the practice of not disclosing the fees of commissioners where, as in this case, the Commissioner is a barrister, the remuneration will ordinarily be at the Commissioner's standard professional daily or hourly fee.