

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

Program 1.1

Question No. 56

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 22 February 2011:

I note that the department's expenditure on legal advice in 2009-10—\$12,851,432.29—represented a 21 per cent increase over 2008-09. Can you explain why the cost of legal services required by the department increased by 21 per cent in a year?

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

Legal services expenditure in 2009-10 increased on expenditure in the previous year by \$3.5m, to a total of \$12,851,432.29. The increase largely reflects the Department's \$2.2m expenditure on the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Excluding expenditure relating to the Commission, total legal services expenditure was \$10.7m. This compares with \$9.4m in 2008-09, which is an increase of \$1.3m.

The \$1.3m increase largely reflects a significant number of extraordinary one-off costs, such as: services in relation to the Early Warning System and trial of remote fire detection (Fire Alert Prototype), litigation involving protection of the Auscheck name, and intervention by the Attorney-General in several court proceedings.