

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

**Program 1.1**

**Question No. 69**

**Senator Abetz asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2010:**

At the last Estimates hearing on Monday 24 May 2010, the Committee suggested that the Attorney-General needed to obtain an independent third party legal opinion on Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs (Islands) in order to satisfy the Government's Risk Assessment Policy. Has this been done and what further actions, if any, have been taken to investigate the risk to the Commonwealth's interests in this matter?

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

The Government has sought additional legal advice. No other action has been taken.

The land areas on Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs form part of the Coral Sea Islands Territory. Under the Administrative Arrangements Order of 14 September 2010, the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government now administers the Territory.