

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SOLICITOR (AGS)

**Question No. 34**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:**

**Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:** You could put this to rest by producing to us copies of those timesheets, which would indicate the time that was spent, the level of officer undertaking the task. That should put it to bed. I would have thought that if your officers were doing their job and doing their job properly your timesheets would demonstrate precisely the amount of work that went in at this time, which would answer in another way Senator Brandis's question about whether all that material was considered. You did, after all, tell us you had 17 lawyers on this case. One assumed they plus the barristers all got together and read the necessary text messages. I think those documents should be produced.

**Senator Ludwig:** You are entitled to ask a question and you are entitled to—

**Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:** Perhaps Mr Govey will tell us whether he is prepared to release them.

**CHAIR:** Senator Fierravanti-Wells, what documents are you specifically seeking?

**Senator Ludwig:** It seems to be a broad question. I would not mind if it was specific.

**CHAIR:** That is why I am asking what specific documents are you referring to.

**Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:** Mr Govey knows precisely what I am referring to, and that is the timesheets that all those 17 lawyers would have been keeping in relation to reading all that material. If I was reading that material I would be billing that time to the Attorney-General's Department, which is what all your lawyers probably would be doing. So if they did spend their time reading it they probably charged for it.

**Mr Govey:** I imagine that would be correct—

**Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:** Thank you, Mr Govey.

**Mr Govey:** and we have already agreed to take it on notice.

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

The AGS time records that show the amount of time spent in reviewing the material retrieved from Mr Ashby's phone prior to filing the application of 13 June contain information that is subject to legal professional privilege and information that is commercially sensitive with respect to AGS's business affairs. It would therefore not be appropriate to provide copies. However, AGS can advise that these records show that 31.5 hours were spent by 3 lawyers undertaking this task.