



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Peter Cain MLA

Addressed to: Peter Garrisson AM SC, ACT Solicitor-General

Reference: ACT Government Solicitor

Hearing: 18/02/2025

In relation to: ACT Government Solicitor and Responsiveness

Question received: 18/02/2025

Answer Due: 26/02/2025

Noting the data in the JACS Annual Report regarding the ACTGS performance information for 2023-24 on page 58.

1. What were the circumstances for the 298 occasions where it took over 57 days to provide a response to a request for legal advice?
2. What time measurement is applied to 'urgent' matters? Same day?
3. It seems unusual to display 29-56 days and 57+ days as categories for time measurement. Why is this data measured and presented like this?
4. Why is this data not measured from 30 days to 50 days, then 50+ days, or 60+ days?

MR PETER GARRISSON AM SC: The answers to the Member's questions are as follows:

1. There are a range of circumstances that contribute to an opinion taking longer than 57 days to be provided to a client. These include, but are not limited to, the initial instructions from the client not being clear and require clarification, complex requests require significant research and extensive second counselling, exploration of new and novel areas of law and the availability of resources. In addition, the number of urgent requests for advice in a given year along with the number of court attendances have an impact on available resources to respond to less pressing requests for legal advice.

It should be noted that in 2023-24 the number of urgent opinions given increased by 2% and the number of court/tribunal attendances also increased by 6%. However, the number of opinions provided in over 57 days decreased by 2%. This suggests that the responsiveness to requests for legal advice has improved.

2. Urgent means needing immediate attention requiring priority over the other matters to meet client's requirements. Advice provided to clients urgently on receipt of a request. Our

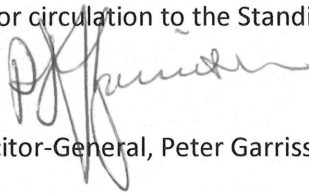
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experience is that an urgent request will generally be attended to within 1-2 days and less than 7 days.

3.& 4. The indicators are based on providing advise within a certain number of days which amounts to a certain number of weeks for example ie within 7 days (within 1 week), 28 days (within 4 weeks), between 29 and 56 days (between 4 weeks and 8 weeks), 57+ days (longer than 8 weeks). The current indicators have been in place for several years and are good measure of responsiveness.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:



Date: 26/2/25

By the Solicitor-General, Peter Garrisson AM SC