



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

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

In relation to: Requests for legal representation approved in the last 12 months

Hearing: 21 July 2026

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 126–127

Transcript provided: 22 July 2026

Answer Due: 29 July 2026

[Peter Garrisson] took on notice the following question(s):

THE CHAIR: Well, welcome to the ACT Government Solicitor and any official from his office. Please note that as witnesses, you are protected by parliamentary privilege and will be bound by its obligations. You must tell the truth, as giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter and may be considered contempt of the Assembly. For the Hansard record, when you speak, please state your name and the capacity in which you appear.

As we will not be inviting an opening statement, we will now proceed to questions. And my first question is around requests made under the Law Officers Legal Services Directions of 2023 for legal fees to be paid by the ACT government. And I have a few questions, if that is all right, around that. How many of these requests have been approved in the last 12 months?

Mr Garrisson: For requests for legal representation?

THE CHAIR: Under the Law Officers Legal Services Directions.

Mr Garrisson: We do not have our final figures yet but it is probably in the vicinity of around about 20.

THE CHAIR: 20?

Mr Garrisson: That figure includes the separate representation of public servants. So, for example, if they require separate representation in an inquest or similar proceeding where we do not think that my office can represent them because there may be a divergence of interest between them and the territory. It also covers applications for workplace protection orders and we've said, in fact, the figure is probably higher than that. But the – we've seen quite a significant increase in having to

make those applications for particularly health staff, but also some staff in education and other directorates where they feel threatened or intimidated in particular circumstances.

It also extends, of course, to representation before the Integrity Commission. There has not been that many applications in the last 12 months because most of the representation has already been done.

THE CHAIR: Been done.

Mr Garrison: But there has been a handful, I would suggest. I do apologise. I was hoping that I would have up-to-date figures in relation to that, but end of year rush and some staffing absences has meant that I have not been able to collate as much of the data as I would like.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I am happy for you to take it on notice as well, Solicitor-General.

Mr Garrison: I am happy to take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: Just on those that have been approved, how many were for defending claims in proceedings brought against the government, and how many were for commencing claims and proceedings brought by the ACT government?

Mr Garrison: I do not believe there were any—I will include this in my response on notice, but all of them—except for those where, for example, they are making a protection order against a third party, they were all being represented in other legal proceedings where they were witnesses, for example, or something of that nature. I do not believe in the last 12 months there was any approval for the commencement of a legal proceeding.

Mr Garrison: I do not believe there were any—I will include this in my response on notice, but all of them—except for those where, for example, they are making a protection order against a third party, they were all being represented in other legal proceedings where they were witnesses, for example, or something of that nature. I do not believe in the last 12 months there was any approval for the commencement of a legal proceeding.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Do you have data on how many were refused?

Mr Garrison: I do not believe there were any refused in the last 12 months, and I provided that data previously, you may recall, chair.

THE CHAIR: That is right.

Mr Garrison: But we will certainly follow that up.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. What is the total cost of services provided by the ACT government of those services in the last 12 months? Do you have a figure?

Mr Garrison: The total cost of legal services as a whole?

THE CHAIR: On that—yes, based on the 20.

Peter Garrison: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The total number of requests for legal assistance by public sector employees or officials approved in the 2025-26 financial year is detailed in the table below. The data provides the number of approvals of legal assistance provided by the ACT Government Solicitor (ACTGS) and external legal service providers.

Legal Assistance	Number of Approvals
ACT Government Solicitor	53
External legal service provider	11
Total	64

It should be noted that an individual may be counted more than once as the nature of the roles of certain individuals or the fora in which matters are being considered may result in an individual requiring the provision of legal assistance in more than one instance.

There was no request refused, however, there were two individuals that were determined to not be eligible for legal assistance under the *Law Officers Legal Services Directions 2023*.

In relation to the cost associated with the provision of legal assistance, the services provided by the ACT Government Solicitor are met through controlled recurrent payment from the appropriation for Output 1.2. The expenditure paid in 2025-26 relating to the provision of legal assistance to public sector employees or officials by external legal service providers was in the order of \$486,000.

I advised at the hearing there was legal assistance provided to public servants where they were witnesses to legal proceedings concerning the government, such as inquests and inquiries but did not involve claims. Other approvals of assistance were to public officials who found it necessary to seek protective court orders against individuals in relations to circumstances arising from the performance of their duties for the Territory.

This being the case, there was no approval for the commencement of claims or proceedings brought by the government. However, during the 2025-26 financial year there was confirmation that an existing approval for legal assistance encompassed interlocutory proceedings against the Integrity Commission.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates

Signature:



Date: 29/7/26

By the Solicitor-General, Peter Garrisson AM SC

