

**2.15 Senator B.E. Shenton of H.M. Attorney General regarding the total cost of providing legal advice to the Planning and Environment Department in 2009:**

What was the total cost of providing legal advice to the Planning and Environment Department in 2009 based on average private sector charge-out rates?

**Mr. T.J. Le Cocq Q.C., H.M. Attorney General:**

I regret that I am not in a position to answer the question in these terms. The question asks about a whole range of legal advice provided to the department in question, which will encompass a range of legal advisory work and possibly court cases. As departments are not charged for the legal advice and services provided by the Law Officers' Department we do not have in place a mechanism for valuing in financial terms the entirety of the services provided. I could not for 2009, for example, give a complete answer in terms of time spent and, therefore, any answer about that component of the total cost assessment would be inaccurate. We do not keep records of the hourly charge-out rates in the private sector. To answer the question as asked would require us to ask firms of varying sizes in the private sector about the range of charges that they apply. It may be misleading to use the average of such figures to quantify a total cost as private sector charge-out rates vary depending upon the qualification and seniority of the individual carrying out the work and the type of work carried out. I regret accordingly I cannot answer the question in those terms.

**2.15.1 Senator B.E. Shenton:**

Can the Attorney General confirm that because no charge-out cost records are kept there is no way that the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) will know the true cost of any department and especially a department that is heavily involved in litigation?

**The Attorney General:**

I am afraid I am not sure what sources of information are available to P.A.C. All I can do is to repeat the answer to the question that I have given. We are able to give indicative numbers of hours spent in respect of work on various departments. There are scales of charges for recoverable costs reported by the Judicial Greffe and kept by the Judicial Greffe. There are means, I think, in which assessments can be made, but in terms of the answer to the question that is put, I cannot give an answer to it.