

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

PREMIER

Subject: **Legal Fees**

Current as at: **09-October-2024**

KEY MESSAGES:

- Public Officers and Ministers may be subject to legal claims/actions despite the fact that they are acting in good faith, within the scope of their duties.
- Public Officers and Ministers may be eligible for an indemnity and/or legal assistance in respect of civil proceedings, arising out of their acts or omissions done in good faith during their office term.
- The ability to provide legal assistance and indemnity to Public Officers and Ministers is essential to the protection of the Crown's interest, the fair treatment of its employees, and the effective management of the State Service.
- The amount spent on such legal advice is driven by demand and these services will vary dependent on that each financial year. Decisions relating to the approval of legal indemnity of a Minister is a matter for Cabinet.
- There has been an increase in legal fees paid by my Department in 2023-24 primarily due to workplace investigations undertaken resulting for the actions of the Commission of Inquiry.

TALKING POINTS:

- The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) processes payments from legal fees from both the DPAC budget and the Ministerial and Parliamentary Support (MPS) budget.
- The DPAC funded expenditure on legal fees totalled \$206,177 in 2023-24. This is an increase of \$74,000 or 35.8 per cent on the previous financial year.

Table 2 – Request for Information June 2024

Legal Fees related to Minister or Member of Government

| Date Paid | Amount (ex GST) | Advice to: | |
|------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|
| | | Minister | Member of Government |
| 1/08/2024 | 20,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 28,023 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 9,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 68,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 21,416 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 195 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 32,000 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 2,106 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 5,750 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 7,794 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 4,950 | X | |
| 10/04/2024 | 2,770 | | X |
| 21/03/2024 | 6,802 | X | |
| 19/03/2024 | 7,895 | | X |
| 5/02/2024 | 1,032 | X | |
| 12/05/2023 | 4,204 | X | |
| 30/11/2022 | 25,200 | X | |
| 27/07/2022 | 2,566 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 6,837 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 125 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 11,674 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 2,172 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 10,312 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 1,364 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 8,663 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 2,094 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 13,970 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 9,237 | X | |
| 20/12/2021 | 67,200 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 624 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 2,229 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 12,250 | X | |
| 22/04/2021 | 40,775 | X | |
| 22/04/2021 | 24,155 | X | |
| 17/02/2021 | 38,193 | X | |
| 20/01/2021 | 2,524 | X | |

Wittison, Sandy

From: QTB
Sent: Thursday, 10 October 2024 5:02 PM
To: Wittison, Sandy
Subject: QTB - OTS - Legal Fees
Attachments: QTB - OTS - Legal Fees.DOCX

Categories: New QTBs received

Hello,

Please find attached the approved new QTB. Thank you!

Yours sincerely,

Siobhan Rafter
Senior Executive Officer - Executive Government Services

Department of Premier and Cabinet
Level 7, 15 Murray Street
Hobart, Tasmania 7000

s 36

QTB@dpac.tas.gov.au | www.dpac.tas.gov.au



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-----< Content Manager Record Information >-----

Record Number: 24/115158
Title: QTB - OTS - Legal Fees

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

PREMIER

Subject: **Legal Fees for Ministers – speculation on Integrity Commission matters**

Current as at: **11-October-2024**

KEY MESSAGES:

- Public Officers and Ministers may be subject to legal claims or actions, despite the fact they are acting in good faith, within the scope of their duties.
- Public Officers and Ministers may be eligible for an indemnity and/or legal assistance in respect of civil proceedings, arising out of their acts or omissions done in good faith during their office term.
- The ability to provide legal assistance and indemnity to Public Officers and Ministers is essential to the protection of the Crown's interest, the fair treatment of its employees, and the effective management of the State Service.
- The amount spent on such legal advice is driven by demand and these services will vary dependent on that each financial year.
- Decisions relating to the approval of legal indemnity of a Minister is a matter for Cabinet.

ARE THE FEES RELATED TO INTEGRITY COMMISSION INVESTIGATIONS:

- Earlier this year the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission, Mr Greg Melick, AO SC, made a public statement about the Commission's obligation to maintain the confidentiality of its investigations.

“Nor should others speculate whether the Commission is undertaking an investigation into a particular person or entity.”

- We are following Mr Melick’s advice.
- We won’t be speculating on Integrity Commission activities.

BACKGROUND:

- The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) processes payments from legal fees from both the DPAC budget and the Ministerial and Parliamentary Support (MPS) budget.



s 27

Wittison, Sandy

From: Taskunas, Vince
Sent: Friday, 11 October 2024 9:28 AM
To: Wittison, Sandy
Subject: HOWLETT - HOT - updated Integrity Commission Investigations



HOWLETT - HOT
- updated Integr...

I updated this to include one line about not making any further comments about legal fees

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Integrity Commission Investigations

Are you the subject of an Integrity Commission investigation yes or no? Premier's comment legal fees?

- Honourable Speaker,
- I thank the honourable Member for the question.
- Earlier this year the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission, Mr Greg Melick, AO SC, made a public statement about the Commission's obligation to maintain the confidentiality of its investigations.
- For the Parliament's information, I will quote the public statement from Mr Melick, issued on April 30 of this year:
- Mr Melick said: "Ahead of the opening of the new session of Parliament, the Integrity Commission is taking the opportunity to remind Members of Parliament about the Commission's obligation to maintain the confidentiality of its investigations, and the importance of not speculating about the identity of individuals or organisations who may be involved in our matters."
- Honourable Speaker, Mr Melick said discretion, and ensuring people were not subjected to untested allegations being discussed in the public arena, were a key part of the Commission's approach.
- I quote: "Parliament has bestowed significant powers on the Tasmanian Integrity Commission," Mr Melick said.

If asked re Premier's comments about legal fees

- Honourable Speaker, the Premier provided a response to similar questions during Estimates, in the relevant hearing.
- I'm not going to provide any further commentary on those matters.

Wittison, Sandy

From: Secretary
Sent: Thursday, 27 February 2025 9:10 AM
To: Wittison, Sandy
Cc: QTB
Subject: QTB - Legal Fees
Attachments: QTB - EGS - Legal Fees.DOCX

Categories: New QTBs received

Good morning,

Please find attached.

Thank you

Kind regards,

Laura Roberts

Executive Support Officer | Office of the Secretary

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Level 7, 15 Murray Street
Hobart, Tasmania 7000

s 36

| www.dpac.tas.gov.au



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QUESTION TIME BRIEF

PREMIER

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Subject: | Legal Fees |
| Current as at: | 26-February-2025 |

KEY MESSAGES:

- Our public officers and Ministers are involved in an incredibly broad array of work programs, strategic issues and complex matters at any given time. From time to time, albeit rarely, they may be the subject of legal proceedings, inquiries, claims and actions despite the fact that they are acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties.
- It is sometimes appropriate, indeed essential, to provide legal assistance and indemnity to Public Officers and Ministers to ensure fair treatment of employees, to protect the Crown's interests and the integrity and effective management of the State Service.
- The consideration and granting of indemnities and legal assistance to public officers is undertaken in accordance with the Government's 'Policy and Guidelines for the Grant of Indemnities and Legal Assistance to Public Officers of the State of Tasmania' (last reviewed 2021)

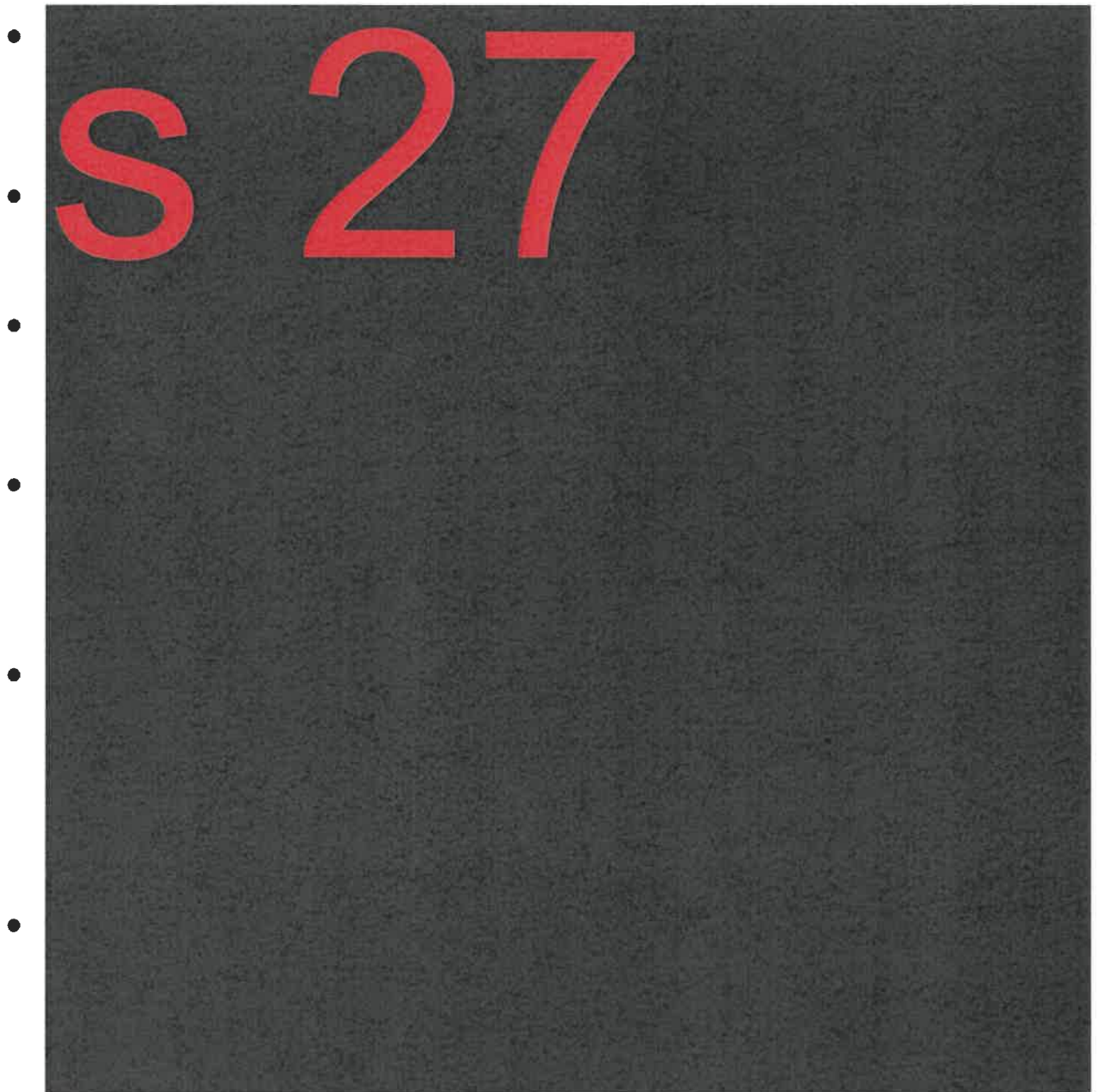
TALKING POINTS:

- The amount spent on legal advice in any given year in instance will vary dependent on the individual circumstances of the case.
- The decision to grant indemnity or legal advice support is not taken lightly. Decisions relating to the approval of legal indemnity of a Minister is a matter for Cabinet. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) processes

payments for legal fees from both the DPAC budget and the Ministerial and Parliamentary Support (MPS) budget.

- The DPAC funded expenditure on legal fees totalled \$206,177 in 2023-24.
- In the same year, the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services funded expenditure on legal fees for Ministers totalled \$256,123.

BACKGROUND:





| | Name | Position |
|-------------|---------------|---|
| Prepared by | Carmen Kelly | Manager Policy and Projects Executive Government Services |
| Cleared by | Shane Gregory | Associate Secretary |

DPAC contact for more information: Lydia Horne, Manager EGS


Table 2 – Request for Information June 2024

Legal Fees related to Minister or Member of Government

| Date Paid | Amount (ex GST) | Advice to: | |
|------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|
| | | Minister | Member of Government |
| 1/08/2024 | 20,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 28,023 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 9,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 68,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 21,416 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 195 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 32,000 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 2,106 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 5,750 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 7,794 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 4,950 | X | |
| 10/04/2024 | 2,770 | | X |
| 21/03/2024 | 6,802 | X | |
| 19/03/2024 | 7,895 | | X |
| 5/02/2024 | 1,032 | X | |
| 12/05/2023 | 4,204 | X | |
| 30/11/2022 | 25,200 | X | |
| 27/07/2022 | 2,566 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 6,837 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 125 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 11,674 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 2,172 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 10,312 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 1,364 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 8,663 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 2,094 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 13,970 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 9,237 | X | |
| 20/12/2021 | 67,200 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 624 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 2,229 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 12,250 | X | |
| 22/04/2021 | 40,775 | X | |
| 22/04/2021 | 24,155 | X | |
| 17/02/2021 | 38,193 | X | |
| 20/01/2021 | 2,524 | X | |

Wittison, Sandy

From: Brown, Melanie
Sent: Sunday, 2 March 2025 5:02 PM
To: Wittison, Sandy
Subject: FYI - Legal indemnity QTB in penultimate draft
Attachments: QTB - EGS - Legal Fees.DOCX

Importance: High

Categories: New QTBs received

Hi Sandy

This one is not yet departmentally cleared – but here it is for your awareness/red flag review in case you determine it's not covering off what you need.

Will get to you formally asap. I'm on deck today or tomorrow if you need to chat.

Cheers

Mel

Melanie Brown

Acting Director | Executive and Government Services

Office of the Secretary



**Tasmanian
Government**

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Executive Building, Level 5, 15 Murray Street

Hobart, Tasmania 7000 Australia

P: s 36 | M: s 36

E: s 36 | W: www.dpac.tas.gov.au

'I acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of this Land and respect their culture and identity which has been bound up with the Land, Sea, Waterways and Sky for generations.'

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

PREMIER

Subject: **Legal Fees and Indemnity**

Current as at: **27-February-2025**

KEY MESSAGES:

- Our public officers and Ministers are involved in a vast array of work programs, strategic issues and complex matters in undertaking their duties in serving the Tasmanian community.
- From time to time, albeit rarely, they may be the subject of legal proceedings, inquiries, claims and actions despite the fact that they are acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties.
- It is sometimes appropriate, indeed essential, to provide legal assistance and indemnity to Public Officers and Ministers to ensure fair treatment of employees and to validly protect the Crown's interests and the integrity and effective management of the State Service.

TALKING POINTS:

- The decision to grant indemnity or legal advice support is not taken lightly.
- The consideration and granting of indemnities and legal assistance to public officers is undertaken in accordance with the Government's 'Policy and Guidelines for the Grant of Indemnities and Legal Assistance to Public Officers of the State of Tasmania' (last reviewed 2021)
- Decisions relating to the approval of legal indemnity of a Minister is a matter for Cabinet.

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BACKGROUND:

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Table 2 – Request for Information June 2024

Legal Fees related to Minister or Member of Government

| Date Paid | Amount (ex GST) | Advice to: | |
|------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|
| | | Minister | Member of Government |
| 1/08/2024 | 20,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 28,023 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 9,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 68,000 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 21,416 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 195 | X | |
| 17/06/2024 | 32,000 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 2,106 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 5,750 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 7,794 | X | |
| 30/05/2024 | 4,950 | X | |
| 10/04/2024 | 2,770 | | X |
| 21/03/2024 | 6,802 | X | |
| 19/03/2024 | 7,895 | | X |
| 5/02/2024 | 1,032 | X | |
| 12/05/2023 | 4,204 | X | |
| 30/11/2022 | 25,200 | X | |
| 27/07/2022 | 2,566 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 6,837 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 125 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 11,674 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 2,172 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 10,312 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 1,364 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 8,663 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 2,094 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 13,970 | X | |
| 22/12/2021 | 9,237 | X | |
| 20/12/2021 | 67,200 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 624 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 2,229 | X | |
| 28/05/2021 | 12,250 | X | |
| 22/04/2021 | 40,775 | X | |
| 22/04/2021 | 24,155 | X | |
| 17/02/2021 | 38,193 | X | |
| 20/01/2021 | 2,524 | X | |

Wittison, Sandy

From: Brown, Melanie
Sent: Monday, 31 March 2025 5:01 PM
To: QTB; Wittison, Sandy
Subject: RE: QTB - EGS - Legal Fees

Thanks Nikky. Sandy, confirming the cleared Legal Services QTB Nikky attached is the same as the one I sent you earlier as 'draft' – so no need to cross check these.

Cheers
Mel

From: QTB <QTB@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 31 March 2025 4:55 PM
To: Wittison, Sandy
Cc: Brown, Melanie
Subject: QTB - EGS - Legal Fees

Hi Sandy

Please find attached QTB for the Premier.

The Associate Secretary QTB is still going through clearance.

Kind regards,

Nikky Beard
Executive Officer | Workflow Team

Department of Premier and Cabinet
Level 7, 15 Murray Street
Hobart, Tasmania 7000

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Please note I work Mondays and Fridays

workflow@dpac.tas.gov.au | www.dpac.tas.gov.au



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QUESTION TIME BRIEF

PREMIER

Subject: **Legal Fees and Indemnity**

Current as at: **25-March-2025**

KEY MESSAGES:

- Our public officers and Ministers are involved in a vast array of work programs, strategic issues and complex matters in undertaking their duties in serving the Tasmanian community.
- From time to time, albeit rarely, they may be the subject of legal proceedings, inquiries, claims and actions despite the fact that they are acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties.
- It is sometimes appropriate, indeed essential, to provide legal assistance and indemnity to Public Officers and Ministers to ensure fair treatment of employees and to validly protect the Crown's interests and the integrity and effective management of the State Service.

TALKING POINTS:

- The decision to grant indemnity or legal advice support is not taken lightly.
- The consideration and granting of indemnities and legal assistance to public officers is undertaken in accordance with the Government's 'Policy and Guidelines for the Grant of Indemnities and Legal Assistance to Public Officers of the State of Tasmania' (last reviewed 2021)
- Decisions relating to the approval of legal indemnity of a Minister is a matter for Cabinet.

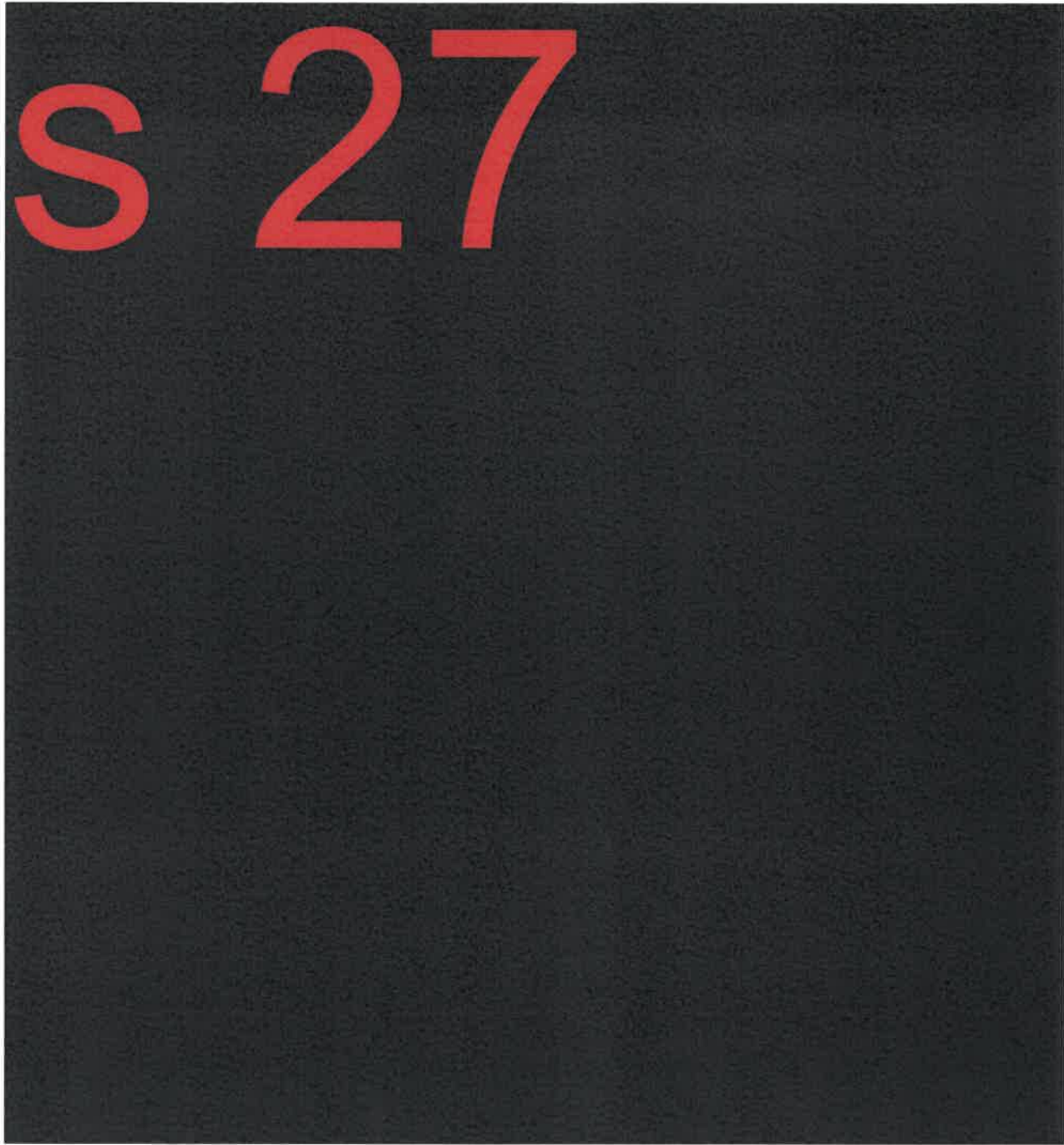
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BACKGROUND:

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| | Name | Position |
|-------------|---------------|---|
| Prepared by | Carmen Kelly | Manager Policy and Projects Executive Government Services |
| Through | Mel Brown | Director, Executive and Government Services |
| Cleared by | Shane Gregory | Associate Secretary |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| DPAC contact for more information: | Mel Brown | Director, Executive and Government Services |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---|

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Jones, Carol

From: Anderson, Lee
Sent: Tuesday, 27 May 2025 12:37 PM
To: Brown, Melanie
Subject: QON

Hey Mel, We are going to need a response to this one.

Payment of Government Members' Private Legal F

Ms O'Connor

Leader of the Government

11 March 2025

Question:

**With regard to payments made by the Government to
using the same format by which previous data was pro
Committee B in September 2024, setting out the dates
payment and whether the payment related to a Ministe
how much has the Government paid in private legal fe
Government between 2 August 2024 and 1 March 202**

Question on Notice

Legislative Council

Question:

Payment of Government Members' Private Legal Fees

Ms O'Connor

Leader of the Government

11 March 2025

With regard to payments made by the Government towards private legal fees of its Members, and using the same format by which previous data was provided to Legislative Council Estimates Committee B in September 2024, setting out the dates payments were made, the amount of each payment and whether the payment related to a Minister or other Member of the Government – how much has the Government paid in private legal fees relating to Ministers or Members of Government between 2 August 2024 and 1 March 2025?

Answer:

| Legal Fees related to Minister or Member of Government | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 August 2024 - 1 March 2025 | | Advice to: | |
| Date Paid | Amount (ex GST) | Minister | Member of Government |
| 11/10/2024 | -898* | X | |
| 22/10/2024 | 3,220 | X | |
| 31/10/2024 | 4,293 | | X |
| 12/11/2024 | 10,185 | X | |
| 12/11/2024 | 4,030 | X | |
| Total: | 20,830 | 16,537 | 4,293 |

*Refund of overpayment

Approved / Not Approved

Jeremy Rockliff MP

Premier

Date:

Premier

**Output Group 1 – Policy, Reform and Government Priorities
Output – 1.1 and 1.2 Ministerial and Parliamentary Support, Support to Members
of the House of Assembly**

Legal Fees and Indemnity

Current as at: **10-November-2025**

Talking Points

- Our public officers and Ministers are involved in complex issues in undertaking their duties in serving the Tasmanian community.
- From time to time, albeit rarely, they may be the subject of legal proceedings, inquiries, claims and actions despite the fact that they are acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties.
- It is sometimes necessary to provide legal assistance and indemnity to public officers and Ministers to protect the Crown's interests and the integrity and effective management of the State Service and ensure fair treatment of employees.
- The decision to grant indemnity or legal advice support is not taken lightly.
- The consideration and granting of indemnities and legal assistance to public officers is undertaken in accordance with the Government's 'Policy and Guidelines for the Grant of Indemnities and Legal Assistance to Public Officers of the State of Tasmania' (last reviewed 2021).



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Budget Information



Background



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Attachments:

- Att 1 – QoN response – 2024/25 Legislative Council Estimates Committee B – Legal fees table
- Att 2 – QoN response – Legislative Council March 2025 – legal fees 2 August 2024 to 1 March 2025
- Att 3 – s 27
- Att 4 – s 27

| | Name | Position |
|-------------|---------------|--|
| Prepared by | Gemma Smith | Program Manager, Executive Government Services |
| Through | Mel Brown | Director, Executive and Government Services |
| Cleared by | Shane Gregory | Associate Secretary |

DPAC contact for more information: Mel Brown Director, Executive and Government Services
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Wittison, Sandy

From: Taskunas, Vince
Sent: Monday, 1 December 2025 8:26 PM
To: Wittison, Sandy
Cc: Anderson, Lee
Subject: Premier- HOT - Killick Mercury article Minister legal fees 011225 [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Categories: New QTBs received

OFFICIAL: Sensitive//EXCLUSIVE FOR



Premier- HOT -
Killick Mercury...

Sandy, quick and dirty for you – may change based on Lee advice but it's a start

OFFICIAL: Sensitive//EXCLUSIVE FOR

Premier: QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Killick Mercury article – Minister Howlett legal fees

Mercury article published online 1 Dec 2025 "Greens demand answers after minister ducks question on legal bills"

Has Minister Howlett had legal fees paid for by the taxpayer in the last 18 months?

Yes

Why did Minister Howlett cover up? Why did Minister Howlett refuse to answer during Estimates?

She provided an answer. And it was an appropriate answer.

How much are Minister Howlett's legal fees and what for?

I don't have the detail on the fees, I will provide that detail when I am able to.

OR

The amount of legal fees paid is xyz for the period xyz (awaiting Lee advice)

You didn't answer what is it for?

I can't comment any further.

Will you provide a breakdown of each Minister and what fees have been paid?

LEGAL FEES AND INDEMNITY

Date: 2 December 2025

- Our public officers and Ministers are involved in complex issues in undertaking their duties in serving the Tasmanian community.
- From time to time, they may be the subject of legal proceedings, inquiries, claims and actions despite the fact they are acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties.
- It is sometimes necessary to provide legal assistance and indemnity to public officers and Ministers to protect the Crown's interests and the integrity and effective management of the state service and ensure fair treatment of employees.
- The Legal Assistance framework is not something new – it was first put in place under the former Labor Government.
- The decision to grant indemnity or legal advice support is not taken lightly.
- All matters prepared for consideration by Cabinet, as well as deliberations and decisions by Cabinet, are confidential.
- I will not be drawn into responding to questions that seek information I am precluded from providing.

IF ASKED ABOUT COST OF FEES

- Over the 2024-2025 financial year, the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services funded expenditure on legal fees totalled \$60,455.
- This included legal assistance for Ministers and Members of Government as well as general legal advice.