

PUBLIC TRUSTEE — FEES

1016. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to the performance audit undertaken by the Office of the Auditor General in the *Public Trustee's administration of trusts and deceased estates*.

- (1) Given that the Auditor General found that “Trust fees did not always reflect actual work effort”, what urgent steps have been taken to address this?
- (2) Given the Public Trustee’s underwhelming response—proposing a new brochure and more frequent financial statements—to the Auditor General’s finding that “Trust clients are not provided with a clear and easy to understand explanation of the fees that are more likely to be charged to their account”, what steps is the Attorney General taking to ensure that these concerns are properly addressed?
- (3) Will the minister table the most recent briefing note or similar document he has received about these systemic concerns about the Public Trustee’s administration of trusts and deceased estates?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Department of Treasury immediately accepted the Auditor General’s recommendation to review the appropriateness and transparency of the Public Trustee’s fees and self-funding model. This review will aim to provide government with options to improve equity and value for money for the Public Trustee’s clients, particularly given the vulnerable nature of its client base. The Attorney General fully supports this action.
- (2) The Department of Treasury review will inform efforts to develop new simplified fee brochures, tailored to suit the different trust client types, which will be published on the Public Trustee’s website.
- (3) This part of the member’s question is unable to be answered in the time provided and I ask him to place it on notice.