

Mystery follows Libs into hearings

A-G grilled over court case

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The political storm over former minister Madeleine Ogilvie's belated explanation of her involvement in Supreme Court proceedings has followed the government into budget estimates hearings, with Attorney-General Guy Barnett on Monday grilled about his knowledge of confidential court orders attached to the case.

Ms Ogilvie dramatically quit the Liberal cabinet on Saturday afternoon, just hours after the Mercury exclusively revealed that the Supreme Court lawsuit, which she had last week conceded having initiated, remained shielded by secret legal protections.

The former frontbencher was facing accusations of misleading parliament, after telling last November's budget estimates hearing that she was not a party to any court action.

On Monday, independent MLC Meg Webb asked the Attorney-General what he knew about the suppression orders in the mystery case, and whether the government had applied to have them kept from public view.

"You're the Attorney General, and I'm asking about it as it has to do with the Supreme Court," Ms Webb said.

"It's something that you, as the Attorney General, if in fact the government had requested

that it not be put on the court portal, which is what I'm essentially asking about, that probably would have been a decision you were involved in as Attorney General."

Minister Barnett told the committee that the case involving Ms Ogilvie was "complex", and that, as it remained before the court, he was limited in how he could reply to Ms Webb's question.

"There are matters regarding confidentiality, and I draw that to the committee's attention, and I make that point that I don't expect to be making further comment."

Questions relating to the circumstances of Ms Ogilvie's responses to parliament about the matter, and about when cabinet approved taxpayer funding for her legal representation, were also raised in estimates hearings attended by Premier Jeremy Rockliff, and Treasurer Eric Abetz.

The former minister's \$120,000 legal bill – accumulated between January 2023 and November 2025 – is part of more than \$600,000 in ministerial legal spending that remains unexplained by the government.

As revealed on Saturday, details about Ms Ogilvie's case remain shielded from public view, with the Supreme Court unable to release case information due to continuing – and unpublished – court orders.