

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000169

OUTCOME: 0 - Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Legal Costs

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Ludwig, Joe

Question:

Since the change of Prime Minister on 14 September, 2015:

1. List all legal costs incurred by the department or agency
2. List the total cost for these items, broken down by source of legal advice, hours retained or taken to prepare the advice and the level of counsel used in preparing the advice, whether the advice was internal or external
3. List cost spend briefing Counsel, broken down by hours spent briefing, whether it was direct or indirect briefing, the gender ratio of Counsel, how each Counsel was engaged (departmental, ministerial)
4. How was each piece of advice procured? Detail the method of identifying legal advice

Answer:

It is not practicable to provide answers to all parts of all questions. Figures are only able to be obtained from the beginning of the month.

1. The total cost of legal services incurred from 1 October 2015 to 31 January 2016 by the Department of Health (including the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator) is \$2,601,601 for external expenditure. Internal expenditure during the period is \$1,041,745.
2. It is not practicable to provide details broken down to this level.
3. 9 female and 12 male Counsel were engaged during the period. All were engaged by the Department.
4. Internal legal advice is routinely provided by lawyers within the Department's Legal Services Branch, or by General Counsel, to program areas as the need arises. External legal advice is generally sought via the Legal Services Multi-User List (LSMUL) which is administered by the Attorney General's Department.