

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications

Question No: 602

Program No. 1.1

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Independent cost-benefit analysis and review of regulation

Senator Conroy asked:

In reference to Vertigan Panel of Experts:

The Department is paying members of the Vertigan Panel of Experts \$1,400 per day. Part-time members of the ACMA are paid \$1,024 per day, and Part-time members of the Productivity Commission are paid \$871 per day. The Chair of the ACMA at the hearing advised that he had made representations to the Remuneration Tribunal for an increase in the part-time member rate.

- a. Did the Department support the submission by the ACMA?
- b. Why does the Department pay a higher daily rate for one off inquiries than is approved for the ACMA?

Answer:

- (a) The Department has not been consulted recently on proposals to increase the pay rate for part-time members of the ACMA. However, in correspondence to the Remuneration Tribunal in 2012 the Department has previously noted the ACMA's view that, due to the need to avoid possible perception of conflict of interest, holders of part-time offices may be limited in their ability to earn other income from their expertise.
- (b) The Chair of the Vertigan Panel is being paid \$1,500 per day and panel members \$1,400 per day in accordance with remuneration arrangements agreed by the Government. This fee is reflective of the short but intense period of time in which the panel are engaged and the specialist skills required.