

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 490

Program No. Special Broadcasting Service

Hansard Ref: Hansard In writing

Topic: Legal costs

Senator Ludwig asked:

Since Budget Estimates in June, 2014:

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)
How was each piece of advice procured? Detail the method of identifying legal advice.

Answers

1. (For the period 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2014)
\$662,676 = the total of the 3 figures in Q2 – internal, external firms & external Counsel]

2. (For the period 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2014)

Internal Legal Costs - \$ 527,378.00

External Legal Costs (Firms) – Finance expenditure report to be run across all SBS cost centres against account code 6901 less \$3,932.80 (Counsel) = \$131,365

External Legal Costs (Counsel) - **\$ 3,932.80**

Advice from external law firms was prepared at various levels - Partner, Senior Executive Lawyer, Senior Lawyer, Senior Associate, Lawyer, Special Counsel, Counsel, Consultant & Law Graduate. To provide hours retained or taken to prepare advice would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

3. (For the period 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2014)

\$ 3,932.80

Counsel was briefed through an external law firm and also directly by General Counsel.

Gender ratio: One female & one male.

SBS is unable to provide hours spent briefing as this information is commercial in confidence.

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Written & verbal. General Counsel briefs external firms directly, having regard to their fields of expertise and experience in relation to the matter to hand. External law firms may brief Counsel, or Counsel may be briefed directly by General Counsel.

Procurement of external legal advice during the reporting period was both oral and written, consistent with our purchasing guidelines. In the main, at least three oral or written quotations are required for amounts between \$3000 - \$10,000. At least three written quotations are required for amounts between \$10,000 and \$300,000.