

## **Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment**

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016**

#### **Agency - Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency**

**Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000531**

**Senator Ludwig provided in writing**

#### **Question**

##### **ASEA - Legal Costs**

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**

1. Since 14 September 2015, the agency has incurred legal costs of \$13,458.20.
2. The source of the legal advice was the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS). Total hours retained were 40 hours. The advice was prepared by officers at the Lawyer/Senior Lawyer level (38 hours and 18 minutes) and settled at the Senior Executive Lawyer level (total 1 hour and 42 minutes). The advice was internal.
3. The cost spent briefing the AGS was \$586.60. Briefings were both indirect and direct (review of email/telephone conversation between AGS and ASEA staff). 15 hours and 42 minutes of advice was provided by female AGS lawyers. 16 hours and 24 minutes of advice was provided by male AGS lawyers. Counsel was engaged directly by ASEA.
4. Advice was procured via an existing arrangement with the AGS.