

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26 May-6 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Cost of legal advice

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 205

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

With reference to the answers to questions 221 and 239 taken on notice at the previous Estimates round:

- (1) On what basis has the department refused to provide information about the amount it expends on legal services?
- (2) Why is the cost of this department's legal advice secret?
- (3) What total amount has been expended on legal services since 18 November 2013?
- (4) What amount was expended on services from providers other than the Australian Government Solicitor?

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department) does not record expenditure on legal services in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided for the periods requested. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

In accordance with the *Legal Service Directions 2005* issued by the Attorney-General, the Department publishes on its website the total internal and external legal services expenditure, including the total expenditure on counsel. The Department will publish its legal services expenditure for 2013-14 by 30 October 2014.