

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26-27 May 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of National Assessments

Outcome/Program: 1

Topic: Legal costs

Senator: Senator Ludwig

Question reference number: 312

Type of Question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

List all legal costs incurred by the department or agency since Additional Estimates in February, 2014

1. 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
2. List cost spend briefing Counsel, broken down by hours spend briefing, whether it was direct or indirect briefing, the gender ratio of Counsel, how each Counsel was engaged (departmental, ministerial)
3. How was each piece of advice procured? Detail the method of identifying legal advice

ONA Response:

1. ONA's total legal cost from 24 February 2014 to 31 May 2014 is \$18,176.50. Australian Government Solicitors (AGS) provided legal services for advice on employment policies, security vetting issues, legislative requirements and contract advice. ONA does not record data in a way that would readily allow a more detailed answer to be provided to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.
2. ONA does not record data in a way that would readily allow a more detailed answer to be provided to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.
3. Legal advice was procured via the Legal Services Multi-Use List.