

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2015

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 111

**Division/Agency:** Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** Cost seeking legal advice

**Proof Hansard page:** 85

**Senator GALLACHER asked:**

**Senator GALLACHER:** Just on that issue have you taken legal advice and what are the costs associated with seeking legal advice and the time that you spent in dealing with this matter?

**Dr Hone:** I think we might have to take that one on notice.

**Senator GALLACHER:** Have you taken legal advice?

**Dr Hone:** We have taken legal advice and I cannot tell you that cost here. Obviously with the time, that is a very difficult one because partitioning this between business of actually improving services, there is so much overlap.

**Senator GALLACHER:** You can take that on notice. You have taken legal advice?

**Dr Hone:** Yes.

**Answer:**

The cost of external legal advice to date is \$2 480 (ex GST).

It would be extremely difficult to calculate the total time spent and hence the associated cost as the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation does not allocate or record staff and board time to specific activities. Since the original letter received by the Minister, the staff and board have spent considerable time, including in consultation with other agencies, dealing with this matter.

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**Topic:** Legal advice

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**Senator GALLACHER asked:**

**Senator GALLACHER:** So you have taken legal advice as to whether the minister can require you to do this?

**Dr Hone:** We have taken legal advice as well, yes.

**Senator GALLACHER:** Can you provide, on notice, the cost of that?

**Dr Hone:** Yes.

**Answer:**

The cost of external legal advice to date is \$2 480 (ex GST).