

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 206
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: Legal Budget
Hansard Page: 99
Question Date: 24 February 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: Does GBRMPA not have its own legal budget?

Dr Reichelt: We do. Our typical action is where we are in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a decision, for instance. There is a few hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Senator WATERS: Each year?

Dr Reichelt: That is about the amount of our budget. It would not necessarily be used each year.

Senator Cormann: We might give you something more specific on notice.

Senator WATERS: Perhaps you could take it on notice.

Dr Reichelt: I could give you our past history of legal expenses on notice if that is okay.

Senator WATERS: Yes, particularly where the action has been taken against the authority rather than where you yourselves have taken the action. That is perhaps the apposite example. Reflecting on your earlier comments—

Dr Reichelt: Sorry, Senator. I was just getting advice. There are really only a couple of cases where it has occurred. It is not a very common event, but we will give you the information.

Answer:

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has a current (2013-2014) annual Legal Services operational budget of \$107,080 (i.e. excluding salaries), with the previous four years being:

- 2012-2013: \$111,790
- 2011-2012: \$116,200
- 2010-2011: \$116,196

The GBRMPA legal services operational budget is for covering costs associated with Legal Corporate Governance, Legal awareness training, Legal Commercial operations, Legal opinions, Legislation, Litigation and general section management.

Since 2010-2011, there has been one appeal lodged against GBRMPA through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal by the Cairns Premier Reef and Island Tours (2011) and resulted in a total legal cost of \$48,989.00 (GST inclusive) paid to the Australian Government Solicitor.

Additionally, GBRMPA currently has one Fair Work Australia Appeal in process with no legal cost associated to date.