

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES (ADDITIONAL HEARINGS) 2013-2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Outcome/Program:

Outcome 1. Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government agencies by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and inspecting statutory compliance by law enforcement agencies.

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator: Senator Wong

Question reference number: 239

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- (1) What total amount has been expended on legal services since 18 November 2013? What amount was expended on services from providers other than the Australian Government Solicitor?

Answer:

- (1) The financial management information system used by the Office can only provide this data on a monthly basis without an unreasonable diversion of resources. The Office spent \$2,883.00 on external legal services provided by the Australian Government Solicitor from 1 November 2013 to 28 February 2014.

No amount was expended by the Office on external legal services from providers other than the Australian Government Solicitor during this period.

The Office does not record internal legal advice data in a way that would readily allow it to answer this question without an unreasonable diversion of resources. Notwithstanding, under paragraph 11.1(ba) of the *Legal Services Directions 2005*, the Office is obliged to make publicly available its legal services expenditure for the previous financial year: the legal services expenditure for the Office may be referred to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's website – www.ombudsman.gov.au.