

Question on notice no. 26

Portfolio question number: SQ24-000530

2024-25 Budget estimates

**Environment and Communications Committee, Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Portfolio**

Senator Mehreen Faruqi: asked the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on 30 May 2024—

Senator FARUQI: Mr Anderson, how many lawyers make up the legal team which the ABC has engaged in the case against Antoinette Lattouf's unfair dismissal claims in the Fair Work Commission and the Federal Court?

Mr Anderson: We have retained the services of Seyfarth Shaw. There is one point person that I deal with, and there is one other person that I have seen-

Senator FARUQI: So there are only two lawyers that make up-

Mr Anderson: I am going to have to take that on notice, Senator, and get back to you.

Senator FARUQI: Thank you. And how much money has the ABC spent to date on these two cases?

Mr Anderson: I am going to have to get back to you on that, Senator.

Answer —

Please see attached answer.

Environment and Communications

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 2024 - 2025

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Committee Question Number: 26

Departmental Question Number: SQ24-000530

Division/Agency Name: Agency - Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Reference: Spoken, Page No. 77 (30 May 2024)

Topic: ABC - Legal team engaged for Antoinette Lattouf case

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Senator FARUQI: Thank you. And how much money has the ABC spent to date on these two cases?

Mr Anderson: I am going to have to get back to you on that, Senator.

Answer:

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) is represented by Seyfarth Shaw in the Fair Work Commission and Federal Court legal proceedings commenced by Ms Lattouf. The legal representatives assisting on this matter are a Partner and 2 Associates.

The ABC has engaged 2 barristers for the proceedings.

Disclosure of information about the amount of legal costs in ongoing litigated matters can prejudice the ABC's position in those legal proceedings. The ABC respectfully submits that to avoid prejudice to the ABC's position, or unintended interference or influence of the proceedings, questions on the costs of litigation should be deferred until the conclusion of those proceedings. Concerns over the release of costs information have been raised previously by the ABC in connection with questions about other legal proceedings (while the proceedings remained on foot) however if it is of assistance, the ABC can provide a public interest immunity claim.