

## Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

### BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Legal Costs

**Question reference number:** HS 6

**Senator:** Fifield

**Type of question:** Hansard page 69

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 22 July 2011

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

- a) **Senator FIFIELD:** Are you able to indicate how much DHS has spent on legal costs for the year to date?

**Ms Campbell:** Mr Popple will be able to answer that.

**Mr Popple:** Are you after 2010-11?

**Senator FIFIELD:** Yes. Firstly, on external legal counsel.

**Ms Campbell:** We may not have 2010-11. Can we start with 2009-10?

**Senator FIFIELD:** Yes.

**Mr Popple:** For the 2009-10 the portfolio spent \$15,200,000 on external legal services.

**Senator FIFIELD:** Do you also have it for 2008-09?

**Mr Popple:** No.

**Senator FIFIELD:** Can you take that on notice?

**Mr Popple:** Yes.

- b) **Senator FIFIELD:** So, you do not have 2010-11, for the year to date?

**Ms Campbell:** No, but we can take that on notice.

- c) **Senator FIFIELD:** Are you able to indicate—although you cannot advise the figure for the year to date—the nature of the legal work?

**Mr Popple:** It covers a wide range of matters, including advice on policy matters or on service reform through to advice on procurement matters and also litigation, where we get involved in particular cases.

**Senator FIFIELD:** Can you take on notice the nature of the work and the purpose for which external counsel is sought?

**Mr Popple:** Yes.

#### **Answer:**

- a) Approximately \$14.4 million.

- b) Approximately \$9 million (to 31 March 2011).
- c) In summary, external legal services were provided to Centrelink, Medicare Australia and the Department of Human Services for matters including advisings on program and corporate law issues (such as human resources or contracts), litigation and providing legal services on specific initiatives (such as Service Delivery Reform).