

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 320

Program No. Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal costs

Senator Ludwig asked:

List all legal costs incurred by the Department or Agency since 7 September 2013

1. List the total cost for these items, broken down by source of legal advice, hours retained or taken to prepare the advice and the level of counsel used in preparing the advice, whether the advice was internal or external
2. List cost spend briefing Counsel, broken down by hours spend briefing, whether it was direct or indirect briefing, the gender ratio of Counsel, how each Counsel was engaged (departmental, ministerial)
3. How was each piece of advice procured? Detail the method of identifying legal advice

Answer:

1. Internal Legal Costs - \$482,863. External Legal Costs (Firms) - \$145,253. External Legal Costs (Counsel) - \$9,042. Senior Counsel was used in preparing advice. To provide hours retained or taken to prepare advice would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.
2. \$9,042. Counsel was briefed both directly through SBS and through an external law firm. Gender ratio: Male. SBS is unable to provide hours spent briefing as this information is commercial in confidence.
3. Written and verbal. Legal advice is sought on an as-needs basis and any procurement of outside legal counsel is approved by a manager or director with sufficient delegation.