

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 206(c)

Special Broadcasting Service

Hansard Ref: Written, 19/02/2016

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Ludwig, Joe asked:

Since the change of Prime Minister on 14 September, 2015:

1. List all legal costs incurred by the department or agency
2. 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
3. List cost spend briefing Counsel, broken down by hours spent briefing, whether it was direct or indirect briefing, the gender ratio of Counsel, how each Counsel was engaged (departmental, ministerial)
4. How was each piece of advice procured? Detail the method of identifying legal advice

Answer:

1. The total legal costs were \$853,969.26. Total external cost for law firms and Counsel was \$139,083.26

2. Law firms engaged for legal advice were Allens Linklaters, Holding Redlich, Baker & McKenzie, Minter Ellison, Grove Law, Mallam Lawyers and Maddocks. Thomas Blackburn SC was directly engaged and Arthur Moses SC and Yaseen Shariff were indirectly engaged through external law firms.

To provide hours retained or taken to prepare advice would require an unreasonable diversion of resources. Advice from law firms was prepared at various levels – Director, Principal, Managing Partner, Partner, Senior Associate, Associate, Lawyer, Solicitor, Counsel, Special Counsel and Senior Counsel.

The total internal cost was \$714,886.00.

Internal legal advice is provided by General Counsel, Senior Lawyers, Legal Counsels and Lawyers who are all currently employed on a full time basis.

3. The cost of briefing Counsel was \$32,376.93. Counsel was briefed through external law firms and also directly by General Counsel. Gender is all male. SBS is unable to provide hours spent briefing as this information is commercial in confidence.
4. Written and verbal advice. General Counsel briefs external firms directly, having regard to their fields of expertise and experience in relation to the matter to hand. External law firms may brief Counsel, or Counsel may be briefed directly by General Counsel.