

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Australia Council**

**Question No: 206(g)**

**Australia Council**

**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. HR and employment law: \$8,029.90 (GST inclusive), and Leasing and property law: \$6,313.10 (GST inclusive).
2. List of total costs:
  - Australian Government Solicitor: \$3,633.30 (GST inclusive). 10.12 hours. Senior Executive Lawyer and Lawyer. External.
  - TressCox Lawyers \$2,679.80 (GST and disbursements inclusive). Partner. External
  - Gadens Lawyers \$8,029.90 (GST inclusive). 14.37 hours. Solicitor, Special Counsel, Director, Partner. External.
3. Not applicable for Australian Government Solicitor and TressCox Lawyers.
  - Gadens Lawyers – \$1,972.15, 3.79 hours, direct briefing, gender ratio 1:1, engaged directly through Legal Services MUL.
4. Australian Government Solicitor – direct procurement with reference to the Legal Services MUL.

TressCox Lawyers – Landlord’s legal costs for which the Australia Council was liable as per the subleasing provisions in the Head Lease.

Gadens Lawyers – direct procurement with reference to the Legal Services MUL.