

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 175  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 3  
**Programme:** Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)  
**Topic:** The Mercury article  
**Hansard Page:** N/A  
**Question Date:** 16 February 2016  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Reference is made to an article in The Mercury on 8th January, 2016 entitled Polar Rescue Bill Unpaid.

1. Is the report correct that there is an unpaid bill of \$2.4 million.
  - a) If not, how much is owing, if any?
2. What avenues are being pursued, if any, to recover the unpaid money?
3. From which budget area has the expense been covered to date? For example, the Department's general budget, the specific Australian Antarctic Division budget, Government general revenue? (Please specify)
4. Is an option being considered to seek recovery from each individual on this tourist venture?

**Answer:**

1. No, the Government does not currently have an "unpaid bill" in relation to the rescue of the *MV Akademik Shokalskiy*.
  - a) See above.
2. The Department is taking appropriate actions to recover the outstanding amounts.
3. The costs of the rescue were paid by the Commonwealth, from the Australian Antarctic Programme budget in 2013-14.
4. No.