

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Additional Estimates February 2017**  
**Communications Portfolio**  
**Department of Communications and the Arts**

**Question No: 43**

**Department of Communications and the Arts**

**Hansard Ref: Written, 10/03/2017**

**Topic: Legal costs**

**Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:**

1. What was the Department's total spend on external legal services (including services provided by the Australian Government Solicitor) (GST inclusive) for calendar year 2016?
  - a) Can an itemised list of costs for each legal matter (GST inclusive) please be provided?
  - b) Can a list of relevant Contract Notices published on Austender please be provided?

**Answer:**

1. The Department does not collate expenditure data on a calendar year basis. However, total expenditure on legal services for 2015-16 was \$3,885,953.98 (GST inclusive). Total expenditure for 2016-17 to 28 February 2017 was \$1,447,475.32 (GST inclusive).
  - a) The Department does not hold itemised lists of costs for each legal matter.
  - b) Please see Attachment 1 for a list of relevant Contract Notices published on AusTender for 2015-16 and 2016-17, including a breakdown of the figures by provider for costs over \$10,000 (GST inclusive).

The Department notes that legal services expenditure in any given period is unlikely to exactly match Contract Notice data because:

- AusTender represents contract values when published, including any contract variations which are also published once executed. Values when published are by necessity, usually only an estimate of the legal services expenditure for the matter; and
- Contracts under \$10,000 (GST inclusive) are not published on AusTender.