

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 29

Program No. Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Ludwig asked:

List all legal costs incurred by the Department/Agency since 25 February 2014.

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:

The total legal costs incurred from 25 February 2014 to 30 April 2014 were \$141,978.

1. The ABC does not keep records of time taken in preparing internal advice. All costs noted in response to this question on notice relate to external advice. The costs cover advice and court appearances in the course of litigation. Total costs over this time related to solicitors were \$75,313 and barristers \$66,665. Of the counsel briefed, approximately 80% were junior counsel and approximately 20% were senior counsel.
2. For cost of counsel, please refer to Question on Notice 17 from Budget Estimates 2014, part 2. Over 95% of the briefing of counsel was direct, with the balance briefed indirectly. The gender ratio of counsel was approximately 15% female, 85% male.
3. As mentioned in answer to question 1 above, the costs provided include both legal advice and litigation. As mentioned in answer to question 2 above, the advice was sought both directly and indirectly. Identifying advice was ascertained by reviewing the financial records of the Corporation.