

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency

Question No: 250

Program No. TUSMA

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator LUDWIG asked:

Since Budget Estimates in June, 2014:

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. TUSMA legal costs since June 2014 to 30 October 2014 total \$9,600 (GST exclusive).
2. It would be an unreasonable diversion of the Agency's resources to answer this question broken down hours retained or taken to prepare the advice. One external legal services provider, Minter Ellison was sourced by TUSMA.
3. TUSMA has not briefed Counsel from June 2014 to 31 October 2014.
4. It would be an unreasonable diversion of the Department's resources to answer this question based on each piece of advice procured. All legal advice was procured by one of the following three methods:
 - from a law firm included on the Legal Services Multi-Use List (LSMUL);
 - from a barrister, either engaged through a law firm or directly briefed by the Agency; or
 - from the Department of Communications in-house legal practice under it Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency .