

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Agency - Fair Work Building & Construction

Department of Employment Question No. EM0237_15

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

FWBC - Legal costs

"List all legal costs incurred by the department or agency since Additional Estimates in 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 Government does not disclose the content of legal advice received by the Government or its agencies. It is important for any government to be able to make fully informed decisions based on comprehensive and confidential legal advice. As such, only total figures for legal service expenditure will be provided rather than a list of each service and costs.

FWBC procures legal services consistent with the *Legal Services Directions 2005* and Financial Management Act Regulations.

FWBC has spent \$1,293,378.01 since 1 February 2014.

A breakdown of the costs is provided below:

Professional Fees	\$	963,291.80
Counsel Fees	\$	252,037.87
<i>Male</i>	\$	211,413.24
<i>Female</i>	\$	26,361.60
Disbursements	\$	78,048.34

In all cases the agency engages counsel.