

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2012
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Department of Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy

Question No: 244

Program No. Legal Services Group

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for this financial year to date within the department/agency. Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- b. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and cost.
- c. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- d. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

The following information is provided in relation to the four different parts of the question:

- a. The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy total expenses on legal services from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012 were \$3,389,971. \$1,384,553 was expensed on external legal services providers. The expenses on legal services provided in-house were \$2,005,419.
- b. The department's expenses on legal services provided by the Australian Government Solicitor from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012 were \$422,661. Data on individual contracts of \$10,000 or more is available on *Austender* (www.tenders.gov.au).
- c. The department's expenses on legal services provided by private law firms from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012 were \$959,147. Data on individual contracts of \$10,000 or more is available on *Austender* (www.tenders.gov.au).
- d. The department's expenses on legal services provided by other sources from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012 were \$2,744.

The Government does not generally 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.