

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission

Outcome/Program: Cross Portfolio

Topic: Legal costs

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: 99

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 6 July 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. 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.
2. 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 costs.
3. 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.
4. 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:

1. The sum spent on internal legal services for the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) for this financial year to date is \$188,489 exclusive of GST. The internal legal costs are for staff salaries. The relevant employees performed a variety of duties, some legal and some non-legal (such as provision of contracting and procurement advice and administration of Freedom of Information requests etc). It is not possible to identify separately the time spent by these employees on legal matters. The cost above assumes they are performing legal roles at all times.

2. The sum spent on legal services from the Australian Government Solicitor for this financial year to date is \$182,475 exclusive of GST. See comment below.
3. The sum spent on legal services from private firms for this financial year to date is \$2,638 exclusive of GST. See comment below.
4. The sum spent on legal services from other sources for this financial year to date is \$4,795 exclusive of GST. See comment below.

Comment: 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 is provided.