

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: All

Topic: Legal costs

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 147

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for the year 2010-11 within the department and agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
2. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for the year 2010-11 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 for the year 2010-11 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 for the year 2010-11 from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
5. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services FYTD within the department and agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
6. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services FYTD from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
7. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services FYTD from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
8. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services FYTD from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

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Answer:

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 rather than a list of each service and costs. Expenditure for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 includes expenditure by the Department from September 2010 for the Offices for the Arts and Sport. These offices were listed in the Department's responsibilities in the Administrative Arrangements Orders on 14 September 2010.

1. Please refer to the publicly released 'Report on Legal Services Expenditure 2010-11' on the Department's website at <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/accountability/legal/index.cfm>, published in compliance with paragraph 11.1(ba) of the Legal Services Directions 2005.
2. The Department's expenditure for legal services from the Australian Government Solicitor for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 was \$881,900.
3. The Department's expenditure for legal services from private firms for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 was \$182,267.
4. The Department's total legal service expenditure from other sources (Attorney-General's Department and counsel) for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 was \$7,436.
5. The Department has spent approximately \$200,000 on internal legal services for the financial year to 31 October 2011.
6. Based on the Department's internal financial management system, the Department's expenditure for legal services for the financial year to 31 October 2011 from the Australian Government Solicitor is \$180,199.
7. Based on the Department's internal financial management system, the Department's expenditure for legal services for the financial year to 31 October 2011 from private firms is \$48,923.
8. Based on the Department's internal financial management system, the Department's expenditure for legal services for the financial year to 31 October 2011 from other sources is nil.