

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

**Program 1.3**

**Question No. 80**

**Senator Wright asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:**

Attorney General's Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) states "The number of enquiries handled by the Department is approximately 18,000 per annum. Many of these enquiries are complex, raise significant legal issues and require a written response".

- (a) Is it accurate that all Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants are advised that they must contact the Department if they had any queries or concerns about legal aspects of their work?
- (b) What happened with these types of queries prior to 2003?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

- (a) Commonwealth marriage celebrants are not advised that they must contact the Department if they have any queries or concerns about legal aspects of their work. They are advised to consult the information and explanatory materials provided to them concerning the legal aspects of their work. If they are still unsure or unclear about the appropriate course of action they are encouraged to contact the Department for guidance.
- (b) Commonwealth marriage celebrants have always contacted the Department about a range of matters connected to their responsibilities including prior to 2003. Such contact has taken a variety of forms.