

## **Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES - 20 OCTOBER 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **Department of Human Services**

**Topic:** Child Support – Change of Assessment Case before the Family Court

**Question reference number:** HSW 43

**Senator:** Johnston

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 9 December 2011

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

I understand the Child Support Registrar is dealing with a Child Support Change of Assessment case that has been referred to the Family Court seeking a retrospective declaration that the Department are not prevented, by reason of an undertaking to the Court, from using certain documents to process a Change of Assessment. In relation to this particular Child Support Change of Assessment Case:

- a) How long has this case taken?
- b) How many DHS people have been involved to date (e.g. 2 Case Officers, 2 Legal Officer etc)?
- c) How many other Government Departments/Agencies and commercial entities have been involved?
- d) What has been the cost for the Department processing this application (includes CSA/DHS personnel costs and any external legal services)?

#### **Answer:**

- a) The Family Court application was filed on 5 September 2011. The application has not been before the Court as at 21 October 2011.
- b) The departmental people who have had some involvement in the preparation of the application for Court include:
  - five senior officers from the Child Support Program and Legal Services Division;
  - one litigation case officer; and
  - one case officer.
- c) Consultation has occurred with Officers from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Attorney-General's Department in relation to issues arising from the matter. The department has retained the Australian Government Solicitor to represent the department.
- d) As at 21 October 2011, the department has incurred external legal costs of approximately \$25,000 in relation to the Family Court application.