

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

**Group: 2**

**Program: 1.3**

**Question No. AE15/087**

**Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 27 March 2015:**

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: No, I am asking in relation to this case and where the money that was guaranteed was coming from—not where will it come from in the future.

Mr Manning: That was still being resolved and it will now be resolved as part of a much bigger resolution as a result of the announcement yesterday. That will be announced in the budget.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: So it was not even resolved as to where it would come from—AGD or somewhere else?

Mr Manning: We knew there were a number of options but where it was finally going to come from had not been resolved.

....

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I will go back to the question. How usual is it for the government to decide that it will cancel the cut that was to occur to the Yarra Ranges service and not have in mind at that point in time how that was to occur?

Mr Manning: In the 12 or 15 months that I have been in charge of this program, I think it is quite usual for government to move money around as need dictates or as decisions are made and that there is often, as part of doing that, a lag between the decision and the finding of the money and, if you like, doing the paperwork and handing over the money.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: So based on your experience in this program?

Mr Manning: I am not saying that it does not happen all the time. It is not unusual for money to be moved within programs and transferred according to needs and decisions.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Tell me how this particular case came about; why this case was resolved in perhaps January as opposed to the other representations that government has been receiving and has subsequently received and finally now responded to.

Mr Manning: I do not know. I was not involved, so I cannot help you with that. I can take it on notice and made enquiries.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Okay. Then, if necessary, if I need to talk to Prime Minister and Cabinet, you will let me know that too?

Senator Scullion: Senator, I am happy to take that question on notice. If there are associated questions with Aboriginal Legal Aid today—I know the announcement was made yesterday, so whilst it is not an estimates sitting of PM&C, with regard to those particular questions I am more

than happy to ensure that the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet answers those on notice, to be of assistance.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Thank you.

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

A number of representations were made to the Attorney-General regarding the Yarra Ranges service provided by Eastern Community Legal Centre. The Attorney-General considered these representations and made the decision to reinstate funding for this particular service prior to the announcement on 26 March 2015.