

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

Program: Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions

Question No. AE17/057

Senator Pratt asked the following question at the hearing on 28 February 2017:

1. The CDPP has a Witness Assistance Service that provides vulnerable victims of crime with information and support. In accordance with the Witness Assistance Service Referral Guidelines which were issued as Director's Litigation Instruction No.14, all victims of slavery and sexual servitude offences must be referred to the Witness Assistance Service so that appropriate information and support is available throughout the prosecution process.

- a) How much funding was provided to the Witness Assistance Service in 2015-16 and how much is budgeted for 2016-17?
- b) How many victims received support from this Service in 2015-16?

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

1. The CDPP has a Witness Assistance Service that provides vulnerable victims of crime with information and support. In accordance with the [Witness Assistance Service Referral Guidelines](#) which were issued as Director's Litigation Instruction No.14, all identifiable children who are considered victims of crime, and all victims of slavery, sexual servitude and forced marriage offences must be referred to the Witness Assistance Service so that appropriate information and support is available throughout the prosecution process. Identifiable victims of certain other offences may be referred where appropriate.

- a) 2015-16 \$182,914
2016-17 \$234,424

b) The CDPP Witness Assistance Service (WAS) had 1540 instances of direct contact with victims/witnesses in the 2015/2016 financial year. Some of these may have involved a single instance of direct contact while others involved numerous instances. Accordingly, the figure of 1540 does not represent 1540 different victims/witnesses as some of these received support on multiple occasions. The support provided by the WAS to victims/witnesses included: updates concerning the legal matter they were involved in; general information concerning the legal process and the role of a witness; support during conferences; referrals to support services; court familiarisation tours; court support in appropriate cases; debriefing following court attendance and assistance with victim impact statements.