

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

**Program: Family Court of Australia & Federal Circuit Court of Australia**

**Question No. AE17/059**

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

How have Government cuts to Legal Aid affected the Courts' timelines, workloads and functions?

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

Federal Circuit Court

Funding for legal aid is matter for Government.

The Federal Circuit Court ordinarily handles many matters involving self-represented litigants and is not able to say definitively whether there has been a material change to the forms of representation of parties across its various federal and family law jurisdictions, or whether timeliness generally has been affected.

Federal Court

The Federal Court does not know whether any recent changes in legal aid funding have affected decisions made by litigants and their advisers about whether or not to commence proceedings in the Court. There has been no significant reduction in the volume or make up of proceedings commenced in the Federal Court in 2015-16 or year to date in 2016-17.