

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

Program: 1.4 Justice Services

Question No. AE17/094

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

1. Of the 12 specialist domestic violence units announced in October 2015 as part of the Women's Safety Package:
 - a) How many have been launched?
 - b) How many are currently operational?
 - c) How were the locations determined?
 - d) Who was consulted on the locations?
 - e) How are they being monitored?
2. What evaluation has been undertaken to ascertain whether the establishment of 12 specialist domestic violence units has improved access to justice and support for domestic violence victims?
3. Of the \$15 million in funding announced in October 2015 for establishing specialised domestic violence units:
 - a) How much funding will be spent on each separate specialist domestic violence unit?
 - b) How much of this funding has been spent so far?
4. Is the Department considering establishing specialist domestic violence units in addition to the 12 that have already been announced?

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

1.
 - a) Twelve new specialist domestic violence units have been established by legal assistance providers at pilot locations in each state and territory. Five health justice partnerships are being supported to deliver legal training and support for health professionals and to provide on-site legal advice at partner hospitals or health centres.
 - b) The twelve specialist domestic violence units and the five health justice partnerships are all currently operational.
 - c) Independent data sources, such as crime statistics and demographic data, were used to help inform suitable locations to pilot these services. The services are located in areas with high reported rates of domestic violence and there is at least one specialist domestic violence unit in each state and territory. The locations cover a mix of urban, regional and remote areas and locations with Indigenous or culturally diverse communities.
 - d) Within the time available, the locations were recommended to Government based on independent data sources as set out in c) above. Once the locations had been determined, state and territory governments were consulted on appropriate service providers.
 - e) The services are being monitored through regular progress, financial and data reports. The department and service providers agreed on a list of data items to be collected. This data set includes client demographic information and details of the legal and non-legal services delivered. The department is planning a national evaluation of the pilot services to establish an evidence

base and inform future Government decisions. Service providers have been given the opportunity to provide feedback on the evaluation framework before it is settled.

2. The department has drafted an evaluation plan with the support of external consultants. The department is consulting with providers on the draft evaluation plan before finalising.

3.

a) The funding allocation over four years for each specialist domestic violence unit is set out below. This table does not include the additional \$3.4 million provided in the 2017-18 Budget to expand the pilot program for specialist domestic violence units, which has not yet been allocated.

State/ Territory	Region	Funded Service Provider	Four-Year Funding
Specialist domestic violence units			
NSW	South-West Sydney	Legal Aid New South Wales	\$1.40m
NSW	Dubbo	Western New South Wales Community Legal Centre	\$1.48m
VIC	North-East Melbourne	Eastern Community Legal Centre	\$1.40m
VIC	Mallee	Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre	\$1.40m
QLD	Townsville	North Queensland Women's Legal Service	\$1.40m
WA	Kimberley	Kimberley Community Legal Service	\$1.60m
TAS	North-West	Women's Legal Service Tasmania	\$1.40m
ACT	Canberra	Women's Legal Centre ACT	\$1.40m
Specialist domestic violence units and health justice partnerships			
QLD	Brisbane and the Gold Coast (selected priority locations)	Women's Legal Service Queensland	\$2.40m
WA	North-East Perth	Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre	\$1.80m
SA	Elizabeth	Legal Services Commission of South Australia	\$1.80m
NT	Alice Springs	Central Australian Women's Legal Service	\$1.80m
Standalone health justice partnership			
VIC	Inner Melbourne	Inner Melbourne Community Legal	\$0.40m

b) The amount of funding provided to date is set out in the table below.

State/ Territory	Region	Funded Service Provider	Funding to date
Specialist domestic violence units			
NSW	South-West Sydney	Legal Aid New South Wales	\$525,000
NSW	Dubbo	Western New South Wales Community Legal Centre	\$555,000
VIC	North-East Melbourne	Eastern Community Legal Centre	\$525,000
VIC	Mallee	Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre	\$525,000
QLD	Townsville	North Queensland Women's Legal Service	\$525,000
WA	Kimberley	Kimberley Community Legal Service	\$600,000
TAS	North-West	Women's Legal Service Tasmania	\$525,000
ACT	Canberra	Women's Legal Centre ACT	\$525,000
Specialist domestic violence units and health justice partnerships			
QLD	Brisbane and the Gold Coast (selected priority locations)	Women's Legal Service Queensland	\$900,000
WA	North-East Perth	Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre	\$675,000
SA	Elizabeth	Legal Services Commission of South Australia	\$675,000
NT	Alice Springs	Central Australian Women's Legal Service	\$675,000
Standalone health justice partnership			
VIC	Inner Melbourne	Inner Melbourne Community Legal	\$150,000

4. This is a matter for the Australian Government. As part of the 2017-18 Budget, the Attorney-General announced that \$3.4 million over two years has been allocated to expand the pilot program for specialist domestic violence units. Of the additional funding, \$1.2 million will be distributed in 2017-18 for part-year operation and \$2.2 million in 2018-19 for 12-month operating costs.