

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

Group 2

Output 1.5

Question No. 166

Senator Siewert asked the following question at the hearing of 23 May 2012:

Aboriginal Hearing Loss

What actions has AGD undertaken to identify hearing loss and impairment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who come into contact with the Justice system since the recommendations of Senate Committee Affairs committee tabled its report into hearing health, *Hear Us*?

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

The Department of Health and Ageing is the lead agency for the Government's response to the *Hear Us* Report. The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) is not taking any direct action in response to the *Hear Us* report.

However, the AGD is leading the implementation of the Australian Government's response to the *Doing Time - Time for Doing: Indigenous Youth in the Criminal Justice System* report, which makes a number of recommendations relating to hearing loss. The Government's response to the *Doing Time* Recommendations 11 (Hearing tests) and 12 (Sound amplification systems) referred directly to work already being undertaken in response to the *Hear Us* report.

In response to the *Doing Time* report Recommendation 13 (Police training to identify hearing loss), AGD raised the recommendation with the National Police Senior Officers Group at its 20 April 2012 meeting. AGD is working with jurisdictions to collate information on current police training as a first step in addressing the recommendation.

At the 12-13 April 2012 meeting of the Standing Council on Law and Justice, the Australian Government brought forward a paper on the *Doing Time* report specifically raising Recommendation 24 (Court interpreter service and hearing assistance). The Standing Council noted the paper. Any further action in relation to this recommendation is a matter for State and Territory governments.