

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

Group: 2

Program: 1.2

Question: BE14/039

Senator Macdonald asked the following question at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:

CHAIR: Again, as I say, I do not want to embarrass the government or ask questions that I should not be asking, but, perhaps on notice, is it possible for you to indicate which Pacific countries we are currently helping? If you have it now, I will take it now.

Mr Wilkins: I think Catherine Hawkins can probably tell you now, just quickly.

Ms Hawkins: In terms of the countries that we are working in, we have been cooperating with Pakistan—

Mr Wilkins: No, in the Pacific.

Ms Hawkins: In the Pacific, we have been working with Papua New Guinea, we have been doing work with the Cook Islands, with Kiribati, with Tuvalu—so a range of countries in the Pacific. We work with the Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network, or PILON.

CHAIR: Where is that based?

Mr Wilkins: At the moment it is serviced by a secretariat in Samoa but meets annually in different countries around the Pacific. It is, basically, the senior legal officers from each of those countries. They look at a range of issues, including some of the issues that you just mentioned around corruption and crime, et cetera. It is an opportunity to, I suppose, encourage people at that level to buy into fixing up some of these problems and addressing some of these issues. We sometimes get the attorneys-general or the solicitors-general along, so it is a relatively senior meeting.

CHAIR: Ms Hawkins, you mentioned some countries, and you said countries like that. Can you give me them all? Perhaps on notice if it is not—

Ms Hawkins: I will give you the full list on notice.

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

In 2013-14, AGD continued to work with Pacific partner countries to strengthen governance frameworks and rule of law. In 2013-14, AGD worked with the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.