

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

Group: 2

Program: 1.1

Question: BE14/047

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

Ms Ingram: You did ask whether there was an increase in debt agreements and that was correlated with fewer bankruptcies. We have been seeing an increase in debt agreements since the GFC. They are still at their highest peak on record. Again, it is really hard to say what the cause of that is.

Senator WRIGHT: Where would these data be available for the public, for someone doing some research into this?

Ms Ingram: We publish statistics now quarterly. It is on our website.

Senator WRIGHT: Thank you for that. Given the push for cost recovery by the agency, are there other changes planned?

Ms Ingram: That is a matter for the government.

Senator WRIGHT: Or any recommendations that have been made by the agency in terms of cost recovery?

Ms Ingram: That is completely a matter for the government and the budget process. I cannot comment on that.

Senator WRIGHT: So I might ask the department then?

Mr Minogue: My response would be the same as Ms Ingram's. That would be a matter for government, to be considered in a future budget process.

Senator WRIGHT: I might ask the Attorney-General, then, whether there are any changes planned. Given the push for cost recovery—

Senator Brandis: Changes to what?

Senator WRIGHT: By AFSA, any changes to fees for bankruptcy, debt agreements, the work of the agency towards a more cost-recovery model? Are there any changes planned?

Senator Brandis: I will take that on notice and give you a detailed response.

Senator WRIGHT: Thank you for those answers.

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

Whether cost recovery options are being developed is a matter for Government. The Government put forward proposals to support the administration of the personal insolvency system and services provided to bankrupts, including the proposed debtors' petition fee which was disallowed in the Senate on 23 June 2014. The Government will assess the implications of the disallowance.