

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017

Attorney General's Department

Program: 1.4 Justice Services

Question No. BE17-216

Senator Kakoschke-Moore, Skye asked the following question on 18 August 2017:

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: There was also some money set aside for the Family Dispute Resolution Services with a focus on vulnerable families. I think there were about eight pilot sites identified in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. There were none identified in South Australia; why was that?

Senator Brandis: I think the department might be in a better position than me to tell you about that, because these allocations were made by the department. I assume that there's an element of identifying the greatest need. Obviously, the larger population centres in a resource-constrained environment will attract the greatest attention.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: I'm just interested in the process that was gone through in order to identify the eight sites that were eventually chosen. I'd like to know if there was any consideration in South Australia.

Senator Brandis: We will take that on notice. What you're asking about is the process by which, and the reasons for which, the particular sites chosen were chosen?

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Correct.

Senator Brandis: We'll take that on notice.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: And why, if there was consideration of any sites in South Australia, they weren't chosen.

Senator Brandis: Potentially, anywhere in Australia could have been chosen, but there was a process. As I say, it's a resource-constrained environment so there are a limited number. There are eight, so we had to identify the eight localities with the greatest demand. I'll take that on notice and we'll give you a more thorough exposition of the process.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: That would be fantastic. Thank you.

The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

A restricted grants round was held between 17 February and 17 March 2017 through the Department of Social Services Community Grants Hub with all 65 Family Relationship Centres, located in every state and territory, invited to submit applications for the pilot. An expert panel of representatives from DSS and the Attorney-General's Department assessed applications to determine those that most strongly met the objectives of the pilot and the selection criteria, and value for money considerations. The eight pilot sites were selected on that basis.