

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

Program: 1.4

Question No. SBE15/026

Senator McKim asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2015:

Senator McKIM: I will put that on notice in that case, and perhaps you can come back to us on that when you are able. To tie off this issue, does the department—and this relates specifically to Environmental Defenders Offices—have data about what kind of advice is most often given by EDOs to members of the public? If you read the Productivity Commission report it is pretty clear that often advice is given for people not to proceed with action that they were contemplating at the time. Does the department keep any data at all along those lines?

Mr Manning: Noting that the Environmental Defenders Offices have not been funded for some time now, we will have to take that on notice to see whether or not the databases that we do have are able to provide information in relation to the categories of work.

Ms Quinn: I suspect it will not go to the level of detail you are looking for, but we can have a look at what there is there. I think it will be more at a count—

Mr Manning: That is right.

Ms Quinn: and magnitude of cases. I am quite confident the outcomes will not be there, but I think we should look.

Mr Manning: We can tell you what we do have.

Senator McKIM: Can I put a question on notice, then, for some advice, in broad terms, about what datasets you have kept, and also whether it is possible to answer the question I asked, given the data that you hold?

Ms Quinn: Sure.

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

The Attorney-General's Department does not have access to data about the content of advice provided by Environmental Defenders Offices (EDOs).

Through the Community Legal Services Information System, the department has access to some service data from EDOs including: the volume of services delivered, by service type (for example, information, advice and/or casework); and de-identified client demographic information.