

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

Output 1.1

Question No. 27

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:

- a) How did the Department receive a copy of Minutes from the Backbench Steering Committee on Family Relationship Centres of 25 July 2005?
- b) What meetings of the Committee did the Department attend?
- c) What correspondence has there been between the Department and the Committee? Can this correspondence be made available?
- d) How many times has the Department taken Minutes at the Committee, and are they available?

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

a) Following the Backbench Taskforce's meeting of 26 July 2005, the Department was advised by the Attorney-General's office that the Chair of the Taskforce, Mr David Fawcett MP, had requested a copy of the Department's notes of the meeting. The Department does not provide a secretariat function for the Taskforce but agreed to provide notes of that meeting. The Department subsequently put together officers' notes into a 'minutes' format. The Department provided those notes to the Attorney-General's office on 29 July 2005. On 11 August 2005, the Attorney-General's office emailed to the Department a revised version of those notes that included comments by Mr Fawcett.

b) The Department attended meetings of the Taskforce on the following dates:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 25 May 05 | 27 March 2006 |
| 16 June 05 | 22 May 2006 |
| 26 July 05 | 19 June 2006 |
| 11 August 05 | 14 August 2006 |
| 14 September 05 | 4 September 2006 |
| 10 October 05 | 9 October 2006 |
| 31 October 05 | 30 October 2006 |
| 28 November 05 | 27 November 2006 |
| 13 February 2006 | 12 February 2007 |
| 27 February 2006 | |

c) Most correspondence with the Taskforce was by Ministers' offices. On occasions the Attorney-General's office asked the Department to correspond with the Taskforce direct. That correspondence was:

- (i) email from Sue Pidgeon to Mr Fawcett on 4 July 2005 about the date of the next meeting, followed by emails between Ms Pidgeon and Mr Fawcett's staff on 7, 8 and 11 July 2005 discussing possible dates (**Attachment A (i-ii)**)
- (ii) email from Sue Pidgeon to Mr Fawcett's office on 28 September 2005 providing documents upon which the Taskforce's comments were being sought (**Attachment B**), and follow-up mail from Ms Pidgeon on 29 September 2005 providing a revised version of one of those documents (**Attachment C**)
- (iii) email from Peter Arnaudo to Mr Fawcett's office on 31 October 2005 providing a copy of the design brief for the logo for Family Relationship Centres and seeking comments from the Taskforce (**Attachment D**)
- (iv) email from Peter Arnaudo to Mr Fawcett's office on 21 August 2006 providing documents to be forwarded to the Taskforce (**Attachment E**); and
- (v) email from Rose Beynon to Mr Fawcett's office on 21 August 2006 providing a further document to be forwarded to the Taskforce (**Attachment F**).

Copies of that correspondence are attached.

d) The Department has not taken minutes at any of the Taskforce meetings as the department does not provide a secretariat function for the Taskforce. Any departmental notes taken at meetings were by individual officers for their own use. As indicated above, following the meeting of 26 July 2005, the Department was asked for a copy of its notes of the meeting and provided those in a 'minutes' format. A copy of those notes is at **Attachment G**.

ATTACHMENT A(i)

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue
Sent: Friday, 8 July 2005 10:26 am
To: 'Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP)'; Pidgeon, Sue
Subject: RE: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Hi Mignon

I will find out about the week after. I suspect that will suit the Attorney-General's office better.

Sue

-----Original Message-----

From: Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP) [mailto:Mignon.Selway@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 8 July 2005 9:39 am
To: Pidgeon, Sue
Subject: RE: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Hi Sue,

David has just let know that he will now be unavailable on the 25th as well. Can we come up with a later either the following week or the first week back in Canberra. Sorry to mess you around

Regards

Mignon Selway

Electorate Officer for
David Fawcett MP
Member for Wakefield

Ph 08 8523 0555
Fax 08 8523 0511

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue [mailto:sue.pidgeon@ag.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 7 July 2005 7:21 PM
To: Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP)
Subject: RE: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Mignon

I am checking with Tim MacKinnon and FaCS to see if they can attend on that date.

Sue

-----Original Message-----

From: Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP) [mailto:Mignon.Selway@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 7 July 2005 1:09 pm
To: Sue.pidgeon@ag.gov.au
Subject: FW: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Hi Sue,

Mr Fawcett has a number of appointments in the electorate on the 27th July. Would the 25th July be suitable? At this stage the previous week is out as well. Please let me know if the 25th is suitable.

Thanks

Mignon Selway
Electorate Officer for
David Fawcett MP
Member for Wakefield

Ph 08 8523 0555
Fax 08 8523 0511

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue [mailto:sue.pidgeon@ag.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 4 July 2005 6:45 PM
To: Fawcett, David (MP)
Cc: Mackinnon, Tim; Syme, David
Subject: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Mr Fawcett

Tim MacKinnon has asked me to let you know that 26 July is a problem for us for the meeting of the Committee. Any time on 27 July would be fine. If that is not suitable, we will need to look at a time during the second half of the previous week (20-22 July).

I should also mention that we will be contacting Mr Rookes as you suggested.

Sue

ATTACHMENT A(ii)

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue
Sent: Monday, 11 July 2005 5:02 pm
To: 'Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP)'
Cc: 'Deborah.Winkler@facs.gov.au'
Subject: RE: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee
Importance: High

Mignon

The Attorney-General's office and Minister Patterson's office have settled on 11.00 on Tuesday 26 July for the meeting. I hope that still suits Mr Fawcett. I assume that he will let the other Members know.

Sue

-----Original Message-----

From: Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP) [mailto:Mignon.Selway@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 7 July 2005 1:09 pm
To: Sue.pidgeon@ag.gov.au
Subject: FW: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Hi Sue,

Mr Fawcett has a number of appointments in the electorate on the 27th July. Would the 25th July be suitable? At this stage the previous week is out as well. Please let me know if the 25th is suitable.

Thanks

Mignon Selway

Electorate Officer for
David Fawcett MP
Member for Wakefield

Ph 08 8523 0555
Fax 08 8523 0511

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue [mailto:sue.pidgeon@ag.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 4 July 2005 6:45 PM
To: Fawcett, David (MP)
Cc: Mackinnon, Tim; Syme, David
Subject: Meeting of Family Relationship Centres Committee

Mr Fawcett

Tim MacKinnon has asked me to let you know that 26 July is a problem for us for the meeting of the Committee. Any time on 27 July would be fine. If that is not suitable, we will need to look at a time during the second half of the previous week (20-22 July).

I should also mention that we will be contacting Mr Rookes as you suggested.

Sue

ATTACHMENT B

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue

Sent: Wednesday, 28 September 2005 7:01 pm

To: 'Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP)'

Cc: 'Deborah.Winkler@fac.gov.au'; Mackinnon, Tim; Arnaudo, Peter; Govey, Ian; Leigh, Kathy; Syme, David; Beynon, Rose

Subject: Documents for the Family Relationship Centres Taskforce [Sec: Unclassified]

Importance: High

Dear Mignon

The Attorney-General's Office has asked me to forward to Mr Fawcett the attached papers for the Family Relationship Centres Taskforce. The first one is the draft Operational Framework for the Family Relationship Centres. When finalised, this will be the key part of the selection documentation in relation to the Family Relationship Centres. For probity reasons it is important that this is treated in-confidence and is not distributed to anyone other than the Taskforce.

The second document (in PDF format) outlines the standard approval requirements for all services under the Family Relationship Services Program,. These are referred to in the draft Operational Framework. (This is not confidential as the standards are already in place for other services under the program.)

We would appreciate comments from the Taskforce as early as possible. Perhaps the best thing would be to organise a meeting of the Taskforce late next week or early the following week to obtain feedback.

Sue Pidgeon
Assistant Secretary
Family Pathways Branch
Attorney-General's Department
ph 02 6234 4884
fax 02 6234 4850
mobile: 0408 481 405

ATTACHMENT C

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue
Sent: Thursday, 29 September 2005 9:38 am
To: 'Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP)'
Cc: 'Deborah.Winkler@facs.gov.au'; Mackinnon, Tim; Arnaudo, Peter; Govey, Ian; Leigh, Kathy; Syme, David; Beynon, Rose
Subject: URGENT: re Documents for the Family Relationship Centres Taskforce [Sec: Unclassified]
Importance: High

Mignon

The paper I sent last night was called information paper in the title of the document rather than the correct title of Operational Framework. Sorry about that. To avoid confusion, here it is again with the correct document title. It also has a minor correction near the end. Please use this one to send out to Taskforce members.

I have also attached again the PDF document on the standard approval requirements under the program, so that you have both together, ready to send out.

I should also have mentioned that Attorney-General has not yet cleared this draft - his office would like to get the Taskforce's input before a final is considered by the him.

Sue

Sue Pidgeon
Assistant Secretary
Family Pathways Branch
Attorney-General's Department
ph 02 6234 4884
fax 02 6234 4850
mobile: 0408 481 405

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue
Sent: Wednesday, 28 September 2005 7:01 pm
To: 'Selway, Mignon (D. Fawcett, MP)'
Cc: 'Deborah.Winkler@facs.gov.au'; Mackinnon, Tim; Arnaudo, Peter; Govey, Ian; Leigh, Kathy; Syme, David; Beynon, Rose
Subject: Documents for the Family Relationship Centres Taskforce [Sec: Unclassified]
Importance: High

Dear Mignon

The Attorney-General's Office has asked me to forward to Mr Fawcett the attached papers for the Family Relationship Centres Taskforce. The first one is the draft Operational Framework for the Family Relationship Centres. When finalised, this will be the key part of the selection documentation in relation to the Family Relationship Centres. For probity reasons it is important that this is treated in-confidence and is not distributed to anyone other than the Taskforce.

The second document (in PDF format) outlines the standard approval requirements for all services under the Family Relationship Services Program,. These are referred to in the draft Operational Framework. (This is not confidential as the standards are already in place for other services under the program.)

We would appreciate comments from the Taskforce as early as possible. Perhaps the best thing would be to organise a meeting of the Taskforce late next week or early the following week to obtain feedback.

Sue Pidgeon
Assistant Secretary
Family Pathways Branch
Attorney-General's Department
ph 02 6234 4884
fax 02 6234 4850
mobile: 0408 481 405

ATTACHMENT D

-----Original Message-----

From: Arnaudo, Peter

Sent: Monday, 31 October 2005 7:06 pm

To: 'david.fawcett.mp@aph.gov.au'

Cc: Mackinnon, Tim

Subject: Design brief on FRC logo [Sec: Unclassified]

Dear Mr Fawcett

As discussed at today's FRC Taskforce meeting, please find attached an electronic version of the key elements of the design brief for a logo for the FRC's. A hard copy was circulated at the Taskforce meeting today. As discussed at the meeting, the Attorney's office and the Department would be grateful for any comments that Taskforce members may have on the document by the end of this week.

Yours sincerely

Peter

Peter Arnaudo

Assistant Secretary - Dispute Management

Family Pathways Branch

Attorney-General's Department

Ph. 02 6234 4847 Fx. 02 6234 4850

Mob. 0400 322 577

peter.arnaudo@ag.gov.au

ATTACHMENT E

-----Original Message-----

From: Arnaudo, Peter

Sent: Monday, 21 August 2006 6:58 pm

To: 'Mignon.Selway@aph.gov.au'

Cc: Pidgeon, Sue; Beynon, Rose; 'Robyn.Fleming@facsia.gov.au'; 'matt.sproule@facs.gov.au'; Prestt, Renee

Subject: FW: Selection Documents for Government Taskforce [Sec: Unclassified]

Dear Mignon

Renee Prestt in the AG's office has asked that I forward the attached documents to you to send on to the members of the Government Taskforce on the Family Relationship Centres.

Should you or any Taskforce member have any query about the document please contact Renee in the AG's office on 02 6277 7300 in the first instance.

Thanks

Peter

*Peter Arnaudo
Assistant Secretary - Dispute Management
Family Pathways Branch
Attorney-General's Department*

*Ph. 02 6234 4847 Fx. 02 6234 4850
Mob. 0400 322 577
peter.arnaudo@ag.gov.au*

ATTACHMENT F

-----Original Message-----

From: Beynon, Rose

Sent: Monday, 21 August 2006 7:27 pm

To: 'Mignon.Selway@aph.gov.au'

Cc: Pidgeon, Sue; 'Robyn.Fleming@facsia.gov.au'; 'matt.sproule@fac.gov.au'; Prestt, Renee; Arnaudo, Peter

Subject: RE: Selection Documents for Government Taskforce [Sec: Unclassified]

Importance: High

Dear Mignon

Further to Peter's email, please find enclosed the Operational Framework for Family Relationship Centres. This is part of the Selection Document and should also be forwarded to the members of the Government Taskforce.

Thanks

Rose

-----Original Message-----

From: Arnaudo, Peter

Sent: Monday, 21 August 2006 6:58 pm

To: 'Mignon.Selway@aph.gov.au'

Cc: Pidgeon, Sue; Beynon, Rose; Robyn.Fleming@facsia.gov.au; 'matt.sproule@fac.gov.au'; Prestt, Renee

Subject: FW: Selection Documents for Government Taskforce [Sec: Unclassified]

Dear Mignon

Renee Prestt in the AG's office has asked that I forward the attached documents to you to send on to the members of the Government Taskforce on the Family Relationship Centres.

Should you or any Taskforce member have any query about the document please contact Renee in the AG's office on 02 6277 7300 in the first instance.

Thanks

Peter

Peter Arnaudo

Assistant Secretary - Dispute Management

Family Pathways Branch

Attorney-General's Department

Ph. 02 6234 4847 Fx. 02 6234 4850

Mob. 0400 322 577

peter.arnaudo@ag.gov.au

ATTACHMENT G

-----Original Message-----

From: Pidgeon, Sue

Sent: Friday, 29 July 2005 1:56 pm

To: Mackinnon, Tim

Cc: Beynon, Rose; Syme, David; Leigh, Kathy; Govey, Ian

Subject: Minutes 26 July 2005 - Backbench Committee on Family Relationship Centres

Tim

(Others, for info)

Here are minutes for Tuesday's meeting of the backbencher committee, based on notes from you, Senator Patterson's office, Rose, David and me. They are more detailed than we might normally have done but that has come from the process of amalgamating so many people's notes.

Sue

-----Original Message-----

From: Mackinnon, Tim

Sent: Thursday, 11 August 2005 2:48 pm

To: Pidgeon, Sue; Syme, David; Saladino, Rosa; 'megan.lees@facs.gov.au'; 'judith.donnelly@facs.gov.au'

Subject: FW: Minutes 26 July 2005 - Backbench Committee on Family Relationship Centres.DOC

[Revised minutes](#)

[See you this afternoon.](#)

[Cheers](#)

[Tim](#)

-----Original Message-----

From: Fawcett, David (MP) [mailto:David.Fawcett.MP@aph.gov.au]

Sent: Thursday, 11 August 2005 12:34 pm

To: Tim.Mackinnon@ag.gov.au

Subject: Minutes 26 July 2005 - Backbench Committee on Family Relationship Centres.DOC

Tim

a few comments on the minutes which I have incorporated. I will give a copy to SG members. see you this afternoon. David

Minutes : Backbench Steering Committee Meeting – Family Relationship Centres

Date: Tuesday 26 July 2005

Location: Meeting Room 1S2 Parliament House

Present:

David Fawcett MP, Member for Wakefield.

Phillip Baressi MP, Member for Deakin.

Tim MacKinnon (Adviser, Attorney-General's office) (AGO).
Megan Lees (Adviser, Senator Kay Patterson's office).
Judith Donnelly (Adviser, Senator Kay Patterson's office)
Debra Winkler (Department of Family and Community Services)(FaCS)
Sue Pidgeon (Attorney-General's Department) (AGD).
Kathy Leigh (Attorney-General's Department).
David Syme (Attorney-General's Department).
Rose Beynon (Attorney-General's Department).

Background: Meeting called to discuss the role of Family Relationship Centres (centres); and the process and timeframes for implementing the centres and support services.

Comments:

David Fawcett provided feedback in response to draft guidelines for the Family Relationship Centres developed by AGD. David Fawcett's comments are summarised as follows:

1. Bullet points 2&3, 1st page are critical and the service objectives should be amended to reflect this.

With respect to advertising the role of the FRCs, David Fawcett requests an increased focus on early intervention services, particularly those that prevent the breakdown of marriage breakdown. David Fawcett would like an emphasis in media releases on the pro-active approach to supporting the institution of marriage, with less focus on divorce in order to avoid the FRC's being seen as purely divorce shops. Phil Baressi commented that centres must not replace existing services. FaCS is analysing how centres will integrate and complement services currently provided by organisations funded under Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP); and the extent to which centres will have the range of FRSP funded services available to them within their areas. AGO commented that centres also have an early intervention role with regard to relationship breakdown. The centres will assist people by providing information and dispute resolution services. This will result in fewer people having to resolve matters through the courts. A divorce shop is preferable to a divorce court. David Fawcett agreed but maintains that the FRCs must be seen as far more than a Divorce Shop or entry point to a divorce court.

2. Last para, 1st page – discussion with regard to limitation of consultations conducted to date David Fawcett was concerned that current consultation processes have not included unfunded community-based organisations (such as volunteer groups). The strength of these organisations is their local knowledge. They are key referral points within their community and should therefore be included in the consultation process. AGD agreed, noting that AGD and FaCS had met with Families for life and Oz Family Life last week. David Fawcett requested that consultation with these organisations occur before the application for funding process commences, as this will enable community organisations to approach/connect with potential applicants for funding. AGD advised that there would be public information sessions at the beginning of the application for funding process, which will enable voluntary community organisations to be aware of the process and enable them to consider applying for funding or otherwise approach/connect with potential applicants. FaCS advised that it has worked with Industry Representative Bodies and has considered engaging the non-funded sector. Phil Baressi noted that this was important as many people (eg women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) are often reluctant to come forward and present to a Commonwealth-funded service.

David Fawcett queried the effectiveness of existing services with regard to targeting clients. FaCS reported that the recent Client Input study (Colmar-Brunton) had high levels of client satisfaction with FRSP-funded services. David Fawcett refers members to FACs commissioned reviews of

funded services which highlights that while those who actually accessed services were generally satisfied, these reports and community experience is that many people are not aware of services (particularly the pro-active ones) and that there are many other areas that FACs should be engaged with (both groups and modes of delivery).

Concerns were raised about accreditation requirements of services referred to by the centres. AGO advised that the centres will develop referral protocols and networks at the local level and these activities (ie ability to integrate, quality of referrals etc) will be part of the performance criteria against which centres will be assessed.

David Fawcett asked whether centres will have the flexibility to use their budgets to deliver, or purchase, programs, seminars and/or information sessions. AGD is looking at providing centres with the flexibility to either deliver or sub-contract services as needed.

3. Avoid use of the phrase “family law system”
4. Avoid use of phrase “.. in all their diversity” as a relationship is not the same as a marriage
5. Outline more pro-active ways to engage clients - just counting clients who come into the centres may not be the best way of judging success. There may be more effective ways of providing services.

David Fawcett is concerned that guidelines will either empower or restrict the capacity of centres to work with, and make full use of, organisations and resources that may be available to them within their communities. If a conservative approach is taken, then options available to centres and other organisations to work with each other will be reduced. For instance, many community organisations have resources, audio-visual materials, facilitators and counsellors that could be used by centre clients. If FRC’s feel that Govt funding guidelines restrict them to a particular sub-set of the Family services sector, these community resources will not be engaged.

6. There should be more emphasis in the client outcomes on the importance of keeping families together.
7. Query concerning outreach, and whether it will go to culturally and linguistically diverse communities (p.4). AGD confirmed that this was the case and agreed that the reference to outreach on page 4 would need to be further developed.
8. Query concerning the conduct of group information sessions – this is only one mode of service delivery; the Committee is keen to encourage innovative approaches and make use of existing resources and organisations. The Committee requested that resources such as printed and audio-video material be developed for use across the full range of community organisations. This is consistent with recommendations stemming from previous FACs reviews.

FaCS advised that its needs-analysis will take into account the range of organisations and resources available to centres within their catchment areas. The extent to which centres integrate with other relevant services within their communities will be considered as part of the evaluation. A committee has been established to oversee the evaluation process.

9. Request for application for funding - criteria should include demonstrated relationship with community. The process should allow other organisations to approach potential applicants.

AGD advised that this could be done through the information sessions.

10. Query accessibility –after hours service delivery (p5)

David Fawcett pointed out that after hours services will be necessary as most people are likely to seek assistance outside working hours.

11. David Fawcett sought information on timeframes.

AGD provided a project plan, with key milestones identified. FaCS advised that it aims to have a future directions paper developed by late August and is currently reviewing its guidelines.

12. Service standards – these need to reflect the objectives of strengthening and supporting families
13. Referrals – David Fawcett raised how we can ensure the centres refer appropriately to the volunteer sector – should there be a requirement that the centres recognise organisation that

meet criteria or guidelines. The Committee would not support referring clients to extreme organisations.

14. Parenting advice – parenting plans should be developed early in the parenting relationship, as these plans help parents work together. We should not wait until marriages break down before doing this sort of work. AGD suggested the need to use other language for such plans in intact families, as ‘parenting plans’ will have a specific meaning under the Family Law Act.
15. FaCS advised that FRSP-funded services and representatives from the Courts and Departments will attend a meeting in late July 2005, to consider future directions of the FRSP, with particular emphasis on what the centres mean for FRSP-funded services. [David Fawcett noted that this meeting about the “future” of FRSP was deliberately limited to current providers and questioned to potential bias in recommendations on future outcomes for the sector.](#)
16. David Fawcett noted the attitude of the legal fraternity, that is, that the package will not impact on the number of matters needing to be resolved by the Courts.

Actions.

| |
|---|
| AGD to consider and incorporate feedback provided on draft guidelines for the Family Relationship Centres. |
|---|

| |
|--|
| FaCS to provide a list of Evaluation Committee members to Steering Committee. |
|--|

| |
|--|
| FaCS to provide fact sheets, recently prepared for FRSP future directions meeting, to Steering Committee. |
|--|

| |
|---|
| FaCS to provide Future Directions paper when it is completed |
|---|

| |
|--|
| FaCS to provide list of community organisations that it will engage/consult with. |
|--|

DESIGN BRIEF

for branding and identity of
Family Relationship Centres, Website and National
Telephone Advice Line

Prepared by
the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Family and Community Services
October 2005

1. Objectives

The Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Family and Community Services (the Departments) invite your submission to undertake the design and production of an identity for the national network of 65 Family Relationship Centres, website and national telephone advice line.

The branding:

- must complement the Australian Government Initiative Branding (see <http://www.gcu.gov.au> for further details)
- must provide a distinct identity for three related services - the Family Relationship Centres, website and national telephone advice line, and
- must be able to be used across all publishing formats, including online and for building signage.

2. Background

The Attorney-General's Department serves the people of Australia by providing essential expert support to the Government in the maintenance and improvement of Australia's system of law and justice. The Department of Family and Community Services is responsible for a broad range of social policies and support affecting Australian society and the living standards of Australian families. These Departments are implementing the Australian Government's major changes to family law and family relationships services. Under the 2005-06 Budget, \$397 million over four years has been provided – the biggest ever investment in the family law system.

These changes stem from a recommendation of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs, following its inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation. A copy of the Committee's report, *Every picture tells a story*, is available online at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca/childcustody/report.htm>.

The Government's response to that report is available at www.ag.gov.au and the review of child support arrangements, also stemming from the *Every picture tells a story* report, is online at <http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/childsupportreport.htm>.

The centrepiece of the family law reforms is the Australia-wide network of 65 Family Relationship Centres. These centres are intended to become an integral part of their communities, by being a place where people can go who need help to make relationships stronger, for assistance with parenting, and when relationships end. The Family Relationships Centres will act as a gateway into the range of services available under the Family Relationships Services Program and need to share a common link with these other services. More information about the Family Relationships Services Program can be found at www.facs.gov.au/frsp

There will also be a national telephone advice line and website to help those who can't get to a centre easily.

The first 15 centres are due to start operations in mid-2006.

Research with potential clients of the centres has led to the following specifications for the development of the centres, and should inform the development of the branding and corporate identity.

Research undertaken for the Departments in relation to the look and feel of the centres, gave the following recommendations:

- There are clear indicators about the desired atmosphere at the centres:
 - not as intimidating as court
 - calm, relaxed
 - secure and safe
 - privacy and confidentiality (not open plan)

- dignified (no queuing or taking a ticket)
 - discreet (people don't want others to know why they are there)
 - feels professional, not amateurish
 - informal, but not too informal
 - not like a Government agency, and
 - not like Centrelink.
- There are clear indicators about what the centres should be like in terms of physical attributes:
 - modern (but not clinical)
 - not a large building (possibly a cottage, small and warm)
 - bright (not dingy) colours
 - comfortable seating
 - welcoming (you can have coffee)
 - in décor possibly more like a house than an office building
 - possibly a garden or water feature
 - soft lighting (not harsh)
 - airy, green, calming, and
 - children's play areas.
- Specifically, there are clear indicators about the name and branding of the Centres:
 - a brand name is needed but this needs to be professional, serious and positive in tone
 - it should embrace more than just 'problems'
 - family and children is the main concern
 - signage must be discreet, and
 - soft, warm, denoting 'family' and 'children'.

For more information about the centres, including information about their look and feel is available in the Information Paper on the Family Relationship Centres at <http://www.ag.gov.au/family>. Tenderers should particularly refer to the section titled 'What will the Family Relationship Centres look like?'

3. Target audiences

The Government intends that the centres will benefit a wide range of families in differing circumstances throughout the relationship cycle.

- couples contemplating marriage or entering committed relationships (may seek information and referral to family relationship education and other early intervention services)
- families following the birth of a child, a child experiencing trouble in adolescence or at other key transition points such as retirement (may seek information and referral to family relationship counselling and skills training or other early intervention services)
- couples who have not separated but are experiencing difficulties (may seek information and referral to family relationship education, family counselling or other early intervention services that can help prevent separation)
- separated or separating families (may require information about help available and the family law system, dispute resolution to help them reach agreement on parenting arrangements, assistance with developing parenting plans and access to family relationships services that meet their needs, such as counselling or programs to help reduce conflict.)
- separated families where parenting arrangements have broken down or court orders are breached (centres will be a first port of call to help families to resolve the problem outside the courts where possible), and
- grandparents and other extended family members affected by separation.

Given that the centres are a new initiative, there is a low level of awareness of the centres and the services they offer across all audiences.

The branding of the centres should appeal across these audiences, and be immediately accessible and recognisable.

Special audiences

Families from Indigenous, rural and non-English speaking backgrounds are special audiences. Specific funding is being provided for services for Indigenous communities and rural communities.

Given the wide range of target audiences, including the special audiences listed, the branding for the centres will need to be designed for legibility as well as aesthetic appeal.

4. The task

The successful agency must develop:

- (a) **Branding and a corporate identity for the Family Relationship Centres, Website and National Telephone Advice Line**

The successful agency will have to develop three separate concepts for focus testing.

The concepts must be presented to demonstrate how they would be applied across a range of materials, initially as:

- a logo, that can be adapted for use in promotional material for the centres, website and advice line
- external and internal signage (which could incorporate both the logo and a list of services offered by each individual centre. The imagery should be able to be used in such a way that it allows passers-by to gain a clear idea of the services offered).
- corporate materials (i.e. a letterhead and envelopes), and
- as part of a website based on the current family law on line.

The final approved branding must be able to be used across a range of materials further down the track, such as newsletters, advertising, posters and flyers.

On completion of the approved design concept, artwork is to be supplied to the Departments as electronic artwork on CD-Rom for use on electronic and hardcopy documents. The formats required are tif, EPS, .bmp, .jpeg and .gif.

(b) Style guide for the Family Relationship Centres, Website and National Telephone Advice Line

The style guide must be concise and easy-to-follow.

It must specify how the branding can and cannot be used on various promotional items, and include information such as:

- use of colours and fonts
- position, and
- use in conjunction with other logos and branding.

5. Special considerations

The branding and corporate identity should work with the existing 'An Australian Government Initiative' branding.

The imagery needs to be highly legible, as well as aesthetically appealing to a range of audiences. The chosen typeface/s need to be easily read by people who have poor eyesight, or reading difficulties. When considering shapes and colours for the logo, the possible uses of the logo (as a letterhead, on publications, web sites, promotional material, signage, etc) should be taken into account. For instance, the logo should retain its integrity when 'reversed out' of a dark colour. The imagery should be colour based – but ideally should feature no more than two or three PMS colours.

The Family Relationship Centres, although a government initiative, will be run by organisations selected through an application process. They will be required to adopt the national branding as their primary identifying symbol. Where another organisation, including the lead organisation funded to operate the Centre, contributes its own resources, the Centre may, with the agreement of the Australian Government, display the badging of that organisation as a secondary identifying

symbol. Therefore, the overall corporate identity should be uncomplicated and potentially able to be used alongside the logos of organisations chosen to run Family Relationships Centres (noting that the branding of funded organisations will always be secondary to the FRC corporate image)

The designs will be focus tested by the researcher contracted by the Departments, and will also require approval by the Attorney-General's Office.

Annexure (i) to ATTACHMENT G

Minutes : Backbench Steering Committee Meeting – Family Relationship Centres

Date: Tuesday 26 July 2005

Location: Meeting Room 1S2 Parliament House

Present:

David Fawcett, Member for Wakefield.

Phillip Baressi, Member for Deakin.

Tim McKinnon (Adviser, Attorney-General's office) (AGO).

Debra Winkler (Department of Family and Community Services)(FaCS). _

XXX (Adviser, Senator Kay Patterson's office).

Sue Pidgeon (Attorney-General's Department) (AGD).

Kathy Leigh (Attorney-General's Department).

David Syme (Attorney-General's Department).

Rose Beynon (Attorney-General's Department).

Background: Meeting called to discuss the role of Family Relationship Centres (centres); and the process and timeframes for implementing the centres and support services.

Comments:

The Committee provided feedback in response to draft guidelines for the Family Relationship Centres developed by AGD. The Committee's comments are summarised as follows:

1. Bullet points 2&3, 1st page are critical and the service objectives should be amended to reflect this.

The Committee requests an increased focus on early intervention services, particularly those that prevent the breakdown of marriage. The Committee would like a more pro-active approach to supporting the institution of marriage, with less focus on divorce. Committee considers that centres must not replace existing services.

FaCS is analysing how centres will integrate and complement services currently provided by organisations funded under Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP); and the extent to which centres will have the range of FRSP funded services available to them within their areas. AGO commented that centres also have an early intervention role with regard to relationship breakdown. The centres will assist people by providing information and dispute resolution services. This will result in fewer people having to resolve matters through the courts. A divorce shop is preferable to a divorce court.

2. Last para, 1st page – discussion with regard to limitation of consultations conducted to date

The Committee was concerned that current consultation processes have not included unfunded community-based organisations (such as volunteer groups). The strength of these organisations is their local knowledge. They are key referral points within their community and should therefore be included in the consultation process. AGD agreed, noting that AGD and FaCS had met with Families for life and Oz Family Life last week. The Committee requested that consultation with these organisations occur before the application for funding process commences, as this will enable community organisations to approach/connect with potential applicants for funding. AGD advised that there would be public information sessions at the beginning of the application for funding

process, which will enable voluntary community organisations to be aware of the process and enable them to consider applying for funding or otherwise approach/connect with potential applicants. FaCS advised that it has worked with Industry Representative Bodies and plans to engage the non-funded sector. Committee noted that this was important as many people (eg women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) are often reluctant to come forward and present to a Commonwealth-funded service.

The Committee queried the effectiveness of existing services with regard to targeting clients. FaCS reported that the recent Client Input study (Colmar-Brunton) had high levels of client satisfaction with FRSP-funded services.

The Committee is concerned about accreditation requirements of services referred to by the centres. AGO advised that the centres will develop referral protocols and networks at the local level and these activities (ie ability to integrate, quality of referrals etc) will be part of the performance criteria against which centres will be assessed.

The Committee asked whether centres will have the flexibility to use their budgets to deliver, or purchase, programs, seminars and/or information sessions. AGD is looking at providing centres with the flexibility to either deliver or sub-contract services as needed.

3. Avoid use of the phrase family law system
4. Avoid use of phrase “.. in all their diversity” as a relationship is not the same as a marriage
5. Outline more pro-active ways to engage clients - just counting clients who come into the centres may not be the best way of judging success. There may be more effective ways of providing services.

The Committee is concerned that guidelines may either empower or restrict the capacity of centres to work with, and make full use of, organisations and resources that may be available to them within their communities. If a conservative approach is taken, then options available to centres and other organisations to work with each other will be reduced. For instance, many community organisations have resources, such as audio-visual tools, that could be used by centres.

6. There should be more emphasis in the client outcomes on the importance of keeping families together.
7. Query concerning outreach, and whether it will go to culturally and linguistically diverse communities (p.4). AGD confirmed that this was the case and agreed that the reference to outreach on page 4 would need to be further developed.
8. Query concerning the conduct of group information sessions – this is only one mode of service delivery; the Committee is keen to encourage innovative approaches and make use of existing resources and organisations. The Committee requested that a video be developed for use across the full range of community organisations.

FaCS advised that its needs analysis will take into account the range of organisations and resources available to centres within their catchment areas. The extent to which centres integrate with other relevant services within their communities will be considered as part of the evaluation. A committee has been established to oversee the evaluation process.

9. Request for application for funding - criteria should include demonstrated relationship with community. The process should allow other organisations to approach potential applicants. AGD advised that this could be done through the information sessions.
10. Query accessibility –after hours service delivery (p5)

The Committee pointed out that after hours services will be necessary as most people are likely to seek assistance outside working hours.

11. The Committee sought information on timeframes.

AGD provided a project plan, with key milestones identified. FaCS advised that it aims to have a future directions paper developed by late August and is currently reviewing its guidelines.

12. Service standards – these need to reflect the objectives of strengthening and supporting families

13. Referrals – the Committee raised how we can ensure the centres refer appropriately to the volunteer sector – should there be a requirement that the centres recognise organisation that meet criteria or guidelines. The Committee would not support referring clients to extreme organisations.

14. Parenting advice – parenting plans should be developed early in the parenting relationship, as these plans help parents work together. We should not wait until marriages break down before doing this sort of work. AGD suggested the need to use other language for such plans in intact families, as ‘parenting plans’ will have a specific meaning under the Family Law Act.

15. FaCS advised that FRSP-funded services and representatives from the Courts and Departments will attend a meeting in late July 2005, to consider future directions of the FRSP, with particular emphasis on what the centres mean for FRSP-funded services.

16. The Committee noted the attitude of the legal fraternity, that is, that the package will not impact on the number of matters needing to be resolved by the Courts.

| |
|---|
| AGD to consider and incorporate feedback provided on draft guidelines for the Family Relationship Centres. |
| FaCS to provide a list of Evaluation Committee members to Steering Committee. |
| FaCS to provide fact sheets, recently prepared for FRSP future directions meeting, to Steering Committee. |
| FaCS to provide Future Directions paper when it is completed? or FaCS to provide information on research (MCGC)? |
| FaCS to provide list of community organisations that it will engage/consult with. |