

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

**Program 1.5**

**Question No. 45**

**Senator Wright asked the following question at the hearing on Tuesday 14 February 2012:**

**Senator WRIGHT:** ... Back in December 2010, the department commissioned evaluations of 20 Indigenous justice programs which are consistent with justice reinvestment approaches. These evaluations are occurring under the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework. The former Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, indicated in his September 2011 Lionel Murphy lecture that interim evaluation reports were due to be provided to the department by the end of 2011. Has the department received these interim reports and will they be publicly released?

**Ms Fitch:** The department has received interim reports in respect of the first tranche of evaluations that are occurring under the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework. As to whether they are to be publicly released, I think it probably was not initially proposed that it be the case. I am happy to follow up whether it is possible to release those, but I do emphasise that the way the evaluations are being undertaken means necessarily that the information flowing from those interim reports is limited. The evaluations are due for completion by the end of this calendar year.

**Mr Wilkins:** The other thing is because we have done it in conjunction with the states, and they are evaluations of state programs, we are bound to ask the states that question too before releasing them because we are likely to lose credibility and comity with the states if we just bung these things out. We will take that on notice.

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

The Department has received interim reports from the first tranche of evaluations taking place under the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework. The two year evaluations started at the beginning of 2011 and will be completed at the end of 2012. While the interim reports will not be publicly released, the Department has negotiated with States and Territories to publicly release the final reports of the evaluations.

The evaluations are occurring over two years to enable adequate analysis of behavioural change over time. These findings cannot be determined until the final reports are prepared. The purpose of the evaluations is to establish a stronger body of evidence about what initiatives are effective at addressing the factors which contribute to offending.