

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

Output 1.1

Question No. 24

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2007:

Family Relationship Centres:

- a) Regarding the performance review planned for December this year.
 - i) Is this still scheduled?
 - ii) Is this review planned to be conducted over all FRCs, or only the ones that were established in the previous round?

- b) Is the Department able to provide staffing figures for each of the FRCs?
 - i) Including:
 - 1) The number of staff per FRC, and the classification of each staff;
 - 2) Whether the current level of staffing per FRC is at the projected (or contracted for) levels;
 - 3) If not, why not and which FRCs are falling behind in staffing?

- c) Have any additional funds been requested by any of the FRCs?
 - i) If so, could you give details, including:
 - 1) The FRCs that requested additional funding;
 - 2) Whether it was provided;
 - 3) Why the funding was needed.

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

a) (i) and (ii) The first performance reviews of the 15 Family Relationship Centres which opened in July 2006 will be undertaken before March 2008. The second and third performance reviews for these Centres will be undertaken before December 2008 and December 2009 respectively.

The first performance reviews of the 25 Family Relationship Centres to be opened in July 2007 will be undertaken before March 2009. The second and third performance reviews for these Centres will be undertaken before December 2009 and December 2010 respectively.

A similar schedule is expected to apply to final 25 Family Relationship Centres, to open in 2008.

b) The Department is not able to provide staffing figures for each of the Family Relationship Centres. The Funding Agreements with organisations funded to operate Family Relationship Centres do not require them to employ specific numbers or classifications of staff. It is up to each organisation to engage, monitor and manage its own staffing in order to meet service objectives.

c) As part of negotiations of funding agreements, some organisations raised the question of the level of establishment funding. In most cases these issues were handled by the officers of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in consultation with this Department, as a normal part of negotiating the funding agreement. In two cases formal requests for additional funding were forwarded to this Department.

i) The details are as follows:

1) Two requests for additional funding were received; one from the organisation establishing the Townsville Family Relationship Centre and the other from the organisation establishing the Strathpine Family Relationship Centre.

2) Additional funding was provided to the Family Relationship Centre in Townsville. The request for additional funding from the Strathpine Family Relationship Centre was declined.

3) Additional funding was required by the organisation establishing the Townsville Family Relationship Centre to assist it with an increase in establishment costs arising directly from the impact of Cyclone Larry on costs of building and related works in Northern Queensland last year.

The organisation establishing the Strathpine Family Relationship Centre requested additional funding to assist with costs required to operate the Family Relationship Centre.