

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

Group 2

Program 1.5

Question No. 133

Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2014:

- 1) Can you describe how the Indigenous Legal Assistance and Policy Reform Program works?
- 2) How much of this funding is spent on policy reform? How much on legal assistance?
- 3) How is funding provided? Is there a distinction between casework and advocacy?
- 4) Would a clause requiring that groups do not participate in policy or advocacy work be consistent with the Not-for-profit Sector Freedom to Advocate Act 2013?

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

- 1) The objective of the Indigenous Legal Assistance and Policy Reform Program is to deliver culturally sensitive, culturally appropriate, accessible, equitable, efficient and effective legal assistance and related services to Indigenous Australians, so that they can fully exercise their legal rights as Australian citizens. Eight Indigenous organisations are funded under the program to deliver legal assistance services at a number of permanent sites, court circuits and outreach locations in urban, rural and remote areas.
- 2) There are no specific separate appropriations for policy reform and legal assistance.
- 3) Funding for Indigenous legal assistance services is allocated nationally. There is presently no distinction between funding for casework and funding for advocacy. The view of the government is that legal assistance should prioritise casework over advocacy.
- 4) The terms of any funding agreements will be consistent with the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory laws.