

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

Program: 1.4

Question No. SBE15/028

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

Ms Quinn: This year and from 1 July this year, community legal centre funding, with very few exceptions, is provided through the national partnership agreement, so bound by exactly the same clauses we were talking about before with Senator McKim.

CHAIR: Okay, but what I am asking you is how you can be assured that community legal centres are not spending Commonwealth money meant for front-line legal defences or representation on things that the Commonwealth does not want them to spend it on.

Ms Quinn: We will be getting reports periodically under the national partnership agreement on, at a state consolidated level, how many services community legal centres have provided—I think it will be divided into the law types. I might have to take on notice what the specifics are so that I can get you a full answer on that, but I can certainly say that in our relationship with states and territories, part of our responsibility is making sure that all the clauses in the national agreement are upheld. We certainly instances where they have asked us for our opinion on a particular activity.

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

Twice a year, each state and territory will report to the Commonwealth on the number of services delivered in the relevant six-month period. Reports will provide the number of services delivered by the legal aid commission and the community legal centres in that jurisdiction. The service data will be disaggregated by service type (information and referral; legal advice; legal task; duty lawyer services; dispute resolution; court/litigation and other representation; and community legal education) and by law type (family, criminal and civil law).