

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Additional Estimates February 2005

Question: HS 29

Outcome 1, Output 1.1 – Effective delivery of Australian Government services to eligible customers

Topic: Legal expenses

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

Senator Evans asked on 15 February 2005:

- (1) Please indicate how much was spent on legal services by Centrelink in each of the last five financial years.
- (2) Please summarise the nature of the legal services that were provided (eg advice on debt recovery, advice on policy proposals, etc).
- (3) For each of the last five financial years, please provide a list of all legal firms that were paid by Centrelink for legal services. Please indicate how much was paid to each of these firms (in each of the last five financial years).

Answer:

(1) The following table provides details of how much was spent on legal services by Centrelink for professional fees and other disbursements in each of the last five financial years.

1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
\$2.830 M	\$2.767 M	\$3.699 M	\$4.513 M	\$4.918 M

(2) The nature of the legal services provided included advice on:

- administrative law matters;
- civil recovery of social security debts;
- commercial law matters including property; information technology; contracts and procurement;
- human resource matters including policy advice; workplace protection orders; code of conduct matters; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity matters; industrial matters; and general legal advice;
- common law matters including legal advice and or representation for claims made against the Commonwealth.

(3) A list of the legal firms that were paid by Centrelink for legal services and how much they were paid is contained in the following table.

Legal Service Provider	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Australian Government Solicitor	\$1,862,552	\$1,560,193	\$1,908,484	\$2,078,521	\$2,364,159
Sparke Helmore Solicitors	\$0	\$317,199	\$793,435	\$980,847	\$1,121,319
Minter Ellison Lawyers	\$143,877	\$676,161	\$675,048	\$1,057,967	\$906,834
Dun & Bradstreet	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$26,614	\$30,537
National Credit Management P/L	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$17,054
Deacons	\$342,981	\$92,674	\$6,999	\$7,976	\$1,814
Corrs Chambers Westgarth	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,245
Dale Boucher Solicitor	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33,640
Paton Hooke Lawyers Pty Ltd	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$677
Saunders & Company	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$310	\$3,021
Colquhoun Murphy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,895	\$0
R J Buchanan QC	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,625	\$0
Ryan Carlisle Thomas	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,182	\$0
Suthers Taylor Lawyers	\$0	\$0	\$5,422	\$5,845	\$0
Victoria Legal Aid	\$0	\$0	\$1,455	\$1,957	\$0
Gordon & Jackson Barrister's	\$0	\$0	\$2,409	\$0	\$0
Blake Dawson Waldron	\$102,403	\$56,529	\$2,270	\$0	\$0
Clayton Utz	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,060	\$0
Gardens Lawyers Gold	\$0	\$0	\$586	\$0	\$0
Gordon & Jackson Barrister's	\$0	\$0	\$3,805	\$0	\$0
Mallesons Stephen Jaques	\$0	\$0	\$277	\$952	\$0
Merrick Spicer & Associates	\$0	\$0	\$506	\$0	\$0
Michael Green Pty Ltd	\$0	\$0	\$1,800	\$0	\$0
Moira Rayner	\$0	\$0	\$1,200	\$0	\$0
Slater & Gordon Lawyers	\$0	\$0	\$685	\$0	\$0
Somerville Laundry Lomax	\$0	\$0	\$1,151	\$0	\$0
Speakman & Associates Pty	\$0	\$0	\$750	\$0	\$0
Terence J McGill	\$0	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$0
Westside Community	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,818	\$0
Harris Lieberman Boyd	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$180	\$0
Harrison & Associates	\$0	\$0	\$198	\$0	\$0
Hunt & Hunt	\$0	\$0	\$6,364	\$0	\$0
James Linklater-Steele	\$0	\$0	\$2,100	\$0	\$0
F J Clarebrough & Associates	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350	\$0
Boyd Wooi Olsen Lawyers	\$0	\$0	\$1,200	\$0	\$0
Sheridan & Stubbs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450	\$0
B R M Hayes Pty Ltd	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,182	\$0