

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Budget Estimates Hearing 26 May - 27 May 2008**



**Question: PM46**

**Outcome 1, Output 2.3.**

**Topic: Did all NGOs receive letter regarding the gag clause**

**Hansard Page: F&PA 31**

**Senator Siewert asked: -On the gag clause: as I understand it, Minister Gillard has written to all NGOs to say, 'You can ignore this clause.' I have spoken to a number of NGOs that have had their letter, but I have also spoken to some that have not. Did it apply also to legal aid centres?**

**Ms Wilson-I will have to take that on notice. I am sorry; I do not have that information with me. I understand that both the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Macklin have been looking at the arrangements with respect to the organisations that their departments have relationships with, but I am not sure how broadly that work extended, so I will take it on notice for you.**

**Senator SIEWERT-If you could, that would be appreciated, because there have been announcements-very strongly welcomed by the NGO community, I might add-about that clause having been removed. But I was in fact talking to some last week who have not had the letter. That would be appreciated. Thank you.**

**Answer: The Attorney-General's Department has advised that Service Agreements between the Commonwealth and community legal centres do not contain any 'anti-advocacy' clauses.**