

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

**Output 1.1**

**Question No. 33**

**Senator Kirk asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:**

- a) Do all existing FRCs have screening and assessment guidelines to address:  
(i) issues of client safety (suspected domestic violence, threat of self harm, violence)?  
(ii) any risks of child abuse or neglect?
- b) Given that family violence or child abuse provide an exception to attendance at dispute resolution, what measures have been adopted by FRCs to identify such situations?
- c) What procedures are then put into action to assist these clients?  
i) Are they working?
- d) i) What data collection systems are in place at the 15 FRCs?  
ii) Is there a national database in place?  
iii) If not, will one be introduced?  
iv) When?  
v) What interim arrangements are in place?  
vi) Has AGD been requiring FRC providers to provide client identifiable information?
- e) i) Given the emphasis of FRCs on avoiding the court process and its adversarial approach, when is a referral to legal advice considered appropriate?  
ii) Are there any guidelines for when centres should refer clients to legal advice?  
iii) If not, why not?  
iv) Are clients explicitly made aware of their rights to obtain legal advice at any time?  
v) How is this achieved?
- f) i) Of the 27,000 calls to the Family Relationship Advice Line in the first three months of its operation, what proportion of calls: (ii) are resolved during the phone call, for example, by the provision of requisite information over the telephone; (iii) are referred on to FRCs for appointment; (iv) are referred to other services and programs; (v) Are there protocols in place between the Family Relationship Advice Line and FRCs to ensure the smooth transition of clients from the Advice Line to FRCs?
- g) There is some concern amongst provider agencies and referral agencies that people assume that the family relationship services are run by a government agency, for example they are often referred to as "that new government service".  
i) Has the Government assessed the extent to which people may be misled in this way?  
ii) Who will be liable for any mishaps, injuries or negligence?

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

a), b) c) and e) See response to Question on Notice 25 from Supplementary Estimates in October 2006.

d) This Question on Notice has been transferred to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

f) See response to Question on Notice 26 from Supplementary Estimates in October 2006.

g) See response to Question on Notice 27 from Supplementary Estimates in October 2006.