

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Output 1.1

Question No. 13

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2006:

In relation to providing funding for Family Relationship Centres:

- a) How much additional money will be given to each of the Family Relationship Centres in the next financial year?
- b) Can the modelling/factors taken into account that were used for the \$48.4 million over 5 years be provided?

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

- a) The first round of 15 Family Relationship Centres will receive additional funding as part of the Child Support Reforms as follows:

Joondalup	\$30,000
Salisbury	\$43,000
Sunshine	\$45,000
Frankston	\$24,000
Ringwood	\$43,000
Hobart	\$23,000
Mildura	\$19,000
Sutherland	\$22,000
Penrith	\$54,000
Wollongong	\$35,000
Lismore	\$23,000
Canberra	\$42,000
Darwin	\$20,000
Strathpine	\$37,000
Townsville	\$23,000
Total	\$483,000

- b) In the last Budget, the Attorney-General's Department was allocated \$45.8 million over 4 years, which was calculated following consultation with the Child Support Agency (CSA). The figure reflects an expected increase in demand on Family Relationship Services Program services such as Family Relationship Centres, the Family Relationships Advice Line, family dispute resolution and family counselling. In addition, it covers the establishment of a telephone or online dispute resolution services to manage some of the demand and support clients who are unable to access face-to-face services.

Information taken into account in calculating the figure is set out below.

- 1. In light of discussions with CSA, it is anticipated that there will be a spike in clients in dispute as a result of the changes to the Child Support Scheme. (This is in addition to the number of

clients who lodge change of assessment applications.) AGD estimated that this spike will result in the following numbers of clients with parenting disputes, noting a decrease in expected client numbers in the final year after introduction of the changes to the child support formula.

2006-07	20,898
2007-08	35,770
2008-09	46,635
2009-10	19,907

2. The estimate further assumes that only matters related to parenting will result in a referral to the FRSP. Of all issues raised by child support clients, it is anticipated only 60% of these will be parenting matters, based on analysis of child support change of assessment applications.
3. The Department further assumed that clients will be actively referred to the services by CSA and that, on this basis, 30% of clients will accept the referral to Family Relationship Centres and family dispute resolution services.
4. In determining the likely demand for family counselling services, the Department assumed only 10% of clients would take-up referrals. This figure is based on the outcomes of the CSA's Direct Telephone Transfer Service, a recent project where CSA clients were referred to an external service for counselling and assistance.

The amount of \$45.8 million covers the following estimated client numbers by service type.

	Family Relationships Advice Line Information and Referral	Telephone and On-line Dispute Resolution	Family Dispute Resolution Services	Family Relationships Centre	Family Counselling Services
2006-07	6,269	4,985	597	824	2,500
2007-08	10,731	8,297	597	2,204	2,500
2008-09	13,990	6,390	597	8,404	3,309
2009-10	5,972	2,389	597	3,583	3,318