

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Question No. 125

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2007:

The Hon Neil Buckley conducted a review of judicial workloads in North Queensland; which community stakeholders were consulted during the review?

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

Terms of Reference:

The terms of reference for the review on behalf of the Family Law Courts Board were:

1. To examine:
 - a) the present, and so far as possible, the projected future family law workload in Far North Queensland, north Queensland and related regional areas (having regard to the fact that there are now resident Federal Magistrates in Townsville and Cairns, and at present a resident Family Court Judge in Townsville);
 - b) The nature and volume of work which might most appropriately and efficiently be undertaken by each of the two courts.
2. In considering the above, to take into account:
 - a) any agreed criteria for work more appropriate to the Family Court of Australia
 - b) the imperative of providing effective and timely justice to all litigants wherever they may live, and
 - c) the efficient and effective use of the resources (particularly judicial resources) of both courts.

Consultation Process:

For the purposes of the review and report, the Honourable Neil Buckley conducted an extensive consultation process in Far North Queensland in the week of 16 April 2007.

In anticipation of the review, in March 2007, invitations to consult were extended to the judiciary and staff of the two Courts, professional bodies, Legal Aid organisations (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Legal Services) and relevant stakeholders in Far North Queensland. Additionally, invitations to consult were provided to the Brisbane based Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association of Queensland. The letter of invitation, sent to the above, was also forwarded by email to the list of family law practitioners retained on the Courts' database.

Interviews Conducted:

Due to privacy issues, we are unable to release the names of those individuals interviewed without seeking approval from each individual participant.