

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

Question No. 141

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

Are you able to provide information on the number of self-represented litigants who have commenced proceedings for the years 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07?

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

For the years to which the question relates, the reports on self represented litigants available from the Federal Court's case management system, Casetrack, rely on a litigant's representative status being manually entered into the system. As it is not always possible to determine whether a litigant is represented at a particular point of time, this data is not a complete picture of the total number of self-represented litigants who have commenced proceedings.

However, the following information has been obtained from Casetrack on self-represented litigants. This information is not an indicator as to whether the proceedings were commenced by an unrepresented party but is an indicator as to the number of matters filed by fiscal year in which at least one party was recorded as being unrepresented at some stage of the proceedings.

Fiscal year	Matters filed with at least one unrepresented party at some stage of the proceeding	Total matters filed	Percentage
2003-04	2664	6017	44%
2004-05	970	4499	22%
2005-06	372	6158	6%
2006-07 (at 6/6/07)	258	4512	6%

A recent enhancement to Casetrack means that it will be possible to generate reports showing the number of parties who are represented, the number of parties who are not represented and the periods of any representation. These reports will be based on the data fields in the system which record a party's legal representative (if any). The new reports will be available for proceedings commenced in 2007-08.