

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

Output 1.7

Question No. 39

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

Please explain the funding of arrangements between the States for Community Legal Services Program grants.

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

Australian Government Funding for Community Legal Centres

The Australian Government currently funds 128 community legal centres (CLCs) through the Community Legal Services Program (CLSP). In 2006-07, the CLSP appropriation totals \$24.712m, including one-off adjustments made at Additional Estimates. Of this amount, \$22.06m is allocated for direct funding of CLCs. In addition, in 2006-07 the Attorney-General approved one-off funding of \$1 million to be used for a range of technology and training initiatives to support CLCs.

Funding for the CLSP in 2007-08 is \$24.856m.

State Funding

The State Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia also provide varying amounts of funding to centres through the CLSP. In 2006-07 these States provided a combined total of \$17.6m to the CLSP. Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory do not contribute any funding to the CLSP.

A table comparing Australian Government and State funding totals for 2006-07 follows:

Cth/State Funding for Community Legal Centres - 2006-07:

| | CTH | STATE | TOTAL | CTH | STATE |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | (\$) | (\$) | (\$) | (%) | (%) |
| NSW* | 5,161,722 | 5,928,383 | 11,090,105 | 46.54% | 53.46% |
| VIC | 4,713,017 | 7,230,488 | 11,943,505 | 39.46% | 60.54% |
| QLD | 3,362,466 | 2,594,117 | 5,956,583 | 56.45% | 43.55% |
| SA | 2,910,277 | 813,204 | 3,723,481 | 78.16% | 21.84% |
| WA | 3,302,845 | 1,026,000 | 4,328,845 | 76.30% | 23.70% |
| TAS | 1,034,002 | 0 | 1,034,002 | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| NT | 900,982 | 0 | 900,982 | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| ACT | 518,896 | 0 | 518,896 | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| NCYLC** | 158,765 | 0 | 158,765 | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | \$22,062,972 | \$17,592,192 | \$39,655,164 | 55.64% | 44.36% |

* Includes NSW Public Purposes Fund money

** National Children's and Youth Law Centre (located in Sydney but not included in NSW funding allocation as the centre is centrally managed)

Australian Government/State Government Program Administration Arrangements

The CLSP is managed under a partnership arrangement, with the Commonwealth and States providing their funding to CLCs under a joint service agreement. The service agreement defines the obligations of each party and provides an accountability framework for the expenditure of public funds. It also sets out the exact amount of funding allocated each year.

The Australian Government has an agreement with, and provides funding for, State Program Manager services from the legal aid commissions in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania and from the South Australian Attorney-General's Department. These arrangements assist in management of the CLSP in each State under a co-operative working relationship. The State Program Managers are responsible for the day to day management of the CLSP in their respective jurisdictions. The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department manages the CLSP in the ACT and NT.