

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

Program 1.1

Question No. 79

Senator Siewert asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2010:

What is the rationale behind the introduction of measure E (client fee income)?

- a. How does the Department determine that \$1.2 million per annum could be collected in fees?
- b. What is meant by a 'more consistent approach'?
- c. Will there be a standard fee policy?
- d. How will services be 'encouraged' to collect more fee income?
- e. Will services that already charge fees have to charge more?
- f. What will be the impact on families?

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

- a. The Department considers this is a reasonable figure based on existing fees policies across the sector.
- b. The Department will consult with the sector over the next 12 months to achieve consistency in the collection of fees across the different service types. It is important to ensure that clients are charged the same fee for services no matter the location.
- c. The Government will be undertaking consultations with the sector on how to best implement a more consistent approach to fees. One option may include incorporating a standard fees policy within future funding agreements.
- d. The Government will be discussing a range of options to encourage service providers to collect fees, including in the context of negotiating future funding agreements from 1 July 2011.
- e. Some services may end up charging more fees than they currently do. This will depend on the approach to fee collection that is currently taken by services.
- f. Impact on families will be minimal. The Government continues to fund the same number of services.