

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

Program 1.1

Question No. 84

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

Why has almost \$5 million been cut directly from the Family Relationships Services Program budget in the next three years?

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

The Government provides over \$200 million per annum to the Family Relationships Services Program to support families. The Government has identified savings within the program, the majority of which have been found by reducing activities to be undertaken by or on behalf of the Attorney-General's Department, and don't affect individual Family Relationship Centres. The savings offset which will directly affect Family Relationship services will not come into effect until 1 July 2011. While the Government has reallocated funding from the Family Relationship Services Program, the Government is actually reinvesting \$154 million for legal assistance services across Australia, a significant proportion of which will be used specifically to help families resolve disputes through targeted legal assistance. These changes now mean more funds are being provided to frontline services to help the most vulnerable Australian families. For example, additional funding will mean more families utilising Family Relationship Centres will be able to access legal information and advice.