

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

Program 1.2

Question No. 24

Senator Fielding asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May

Senator FIELDING: This is an issue that I have been following for a little bit on the changing of names. To help people who may be listening in to this, under existing state laws criminals can change their name by deed poll and state systems of births deaths and marriages are not required to notify the police.

...

Given that background and given my previous questions here how long has the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, SCAG, being aware of this dangerous change of name loophole that allows people to hide their criminal history from authorities?

Mr Wilkins: I do not know, Senator.

Senator FIELDING: I have raised it so you—

Mr Wilkins: I would have to take it on notice as to how long SCAG has known about that. I am told that it has been on their agenda since 2009.

Senator FIELDING: Could you take that on notice? I may have alerted you before but I need to check that myself.

Mr Wilkins: I think we might have even answered it before.

Senator FIELDING: So you will take that on notice then?

Mr Wilkins: Sure. We apparently did provide an answer to this in the Senate chamber.

...

Mr Wilkins: I think there are two things going on here. One is the document verification system, which has actually been approved, so SCAG has dealt with that. It is actually in place—virtually in place, being rolled out. You may be referring to some other process that I have confused with that—is that right?

Senator FIELDING: This is an issue the Attorney-General is dealing with.

Mr Wilkins: Yes, they have dealt with the document verification.

Senator FIELDING: I would like to know what the time frame is and when it will be completed.

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

In 2009 Attorneys-General agreed that National Justice Chief Executive Officers (NJCEOs) would develop best practice change of name processes. The Working Group, being led by New South Wales (NSW), is currently looking at options for reform. NSW has advised that, subject to agreement on the draft recommendations, the paper is expected to be considered at the NJCEOs and SCAG meetings on 17 and 18 November 2011, respectively.