

## Estimates Committee 2003 Questions Taken On Notice

( 01/10/2002 to 01/10/2004 )

Date: 06/25/2003 Output:  
Sub Output:  
Subject: Continuation of Women's Information Centre

**From:** Ms CARNEY to Chief Minister  
Minister for Women's Policy

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**Question:** **3-3**  
Will the Women's Information Centre continue to exist in 2003-04?

**Answer:**  
Answered On: 06/27/2003  
Answer: The Women's Information Centre in Alice Springs was established some 16 years ago in response to the needs of women who were isolated from family and other community support and reflected the model of that period.

Since then, there have been improvements in the availability of services for women in the Alice Springs area, such as women's shelters, domestic violence programs, health services, legal services, and a working women's service. Significant advances in communication technology have immeasurably improved access to information.

A review of the services and activities provided by the Women's Information Services in 2001, highlighted a number of issues. Firstly the service was grossly under utilised and, secondly, the needs of indigenous women urban and remote, were not being met. Areas of unmet demand were also identified.

In particular, those areas of unmet demand included the need for more sexual assault referral and counselling support services as well as additional family parenting support services.

The Department of Health and Community Services is currently re-shaping the service to respond to the contemporary critical and emerging needs of women and their families in Central Australia. Women's access to information and support in the Alice Springs area is still being maintained by continuing to provide library access, and referral to appropriate services for women.

DHCS is currently exploring options for addressing service needs as well as identifying what needed to be preserved from the previous service arrangement.