

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Vowles to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice:

Attorney-General

1. Legal Services (solicitor hours) has reduced by 12 000 hours. The Budget Paper says it was due to a contraction of the legal practice. What exactly does this mean?

Answer

The legal practice in SFNT was rationalised following the 'mini budget' in December 2012 which resulted in the loss of 22 law officers. Non-Executive lawyers have progressively left as their contracts have ended or they have found alternative employment since April 2013. The current estimate of hours has been revised based upon the staffing expected to be available for the 2014-15 financial year which is 12,000 hours less than previous years. This estimate is based upon existing staffing levels and does not anticipate additional reductions.

2. Have the Community Visitor Program arrangements been finalised for the Anti-Discrimination Commission? If so, is there any expected variant on the budget?

Answer

The core funding for the Community Visitor Program (CVP), which is auspiced by the Anti-Discrimination Commission (ADC), is appropriated to both the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice and the Department of Health. The Department of Health has confirmed funding for the 2014/15 year at the same level as the 2013/14 year. The funding for 2014/15 does not include the one off funding provided in 2013/14 to enable the expansion of the scope of the program into monitoring the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment facilities.

However the question of the corporate on costs for the various components of funding is still to be resolved.

3. Please outline the number of cases by civil and criminal before the lower courts and higher courts in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and the estimate for 2013/14.

Answer

Lodgements		2012/13 Annual Report		2013/14 @31 March	BP3 Estimate 2013/14
		2011/12	2012/13		
Higher Court	Criminal	510	511	327	500
	Civil	488	497	381	500
Lower Court	Criminal	13,528	17,505	14,358	15,000
	Civil	6,781	7,037	5,276	6,500

Finalisation rate		2012/13 Annual Report		2013/14 @31 March	BP3 Estimate 2013/14
		2011/12	2012/13		
Higher Court	Criminal	94%	95%	95%	90%
	Civil	89%	90%	91%	85%
Lower Court	Criminal	63%	77%	87%	80%
	Civil	82%	81%	92%	85%

4. Please outline forecasts for cases by civil and criminal before the lower courts and higher courts in 2014/15.

Answer

This information is available in Budget Paper No. 3, Part 1, Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, Outputs and Performance, Court Support Services Output Group, pages 128/129.