

Question on Notice

No. 974

Asked on Wednesday, 1 September 2004

Mr Wells asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) -

QUESTION:

What are the current statistics relating to the community mediation program?

ANSWER:

The Dispute Resolution Branch (formerly Community Justice Program) continues to offer civil mediation services across Queensland. The Branch currently maintains Dispute Resolution Centres in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay and South East Queensland.

Initially established in 1990 to conduct mediations between disputing neighbours, the Branch now conducts mediations in workplace conflicts, family disputes, public issue and environmental conflicts and commercial matters. Matters are ordered by the Magistrates and District Courts and also referred to mediation from a range of other state and federal government bodies.

In the 2003/04 financial year the Dispute Resolution Branch completed a total of 1869 mediations across the state. Of these mediations, 59% were conducted in regional areas outside South East Queensland. A client satisfaction rate of 94% was maintained along with an average file turnaround time of 19 days. The Branch reached agreement rates of 83% for voluntary mediation, 65% for Mandatory (Court / Tribunal Ordered) Mediation and 51% for Abbreviated Mediation (Small Claims Tribunal / Minor Debts Court).

In the civil arena, the Dispute Resolution Branch completed 334 mediations between 1 July and 31 August 2004. Of these mediations, 62% were conducted in regional areas outside South East Queensland. The Branch has achieved a client satisfaction rate of 89% during this period and a file turnaround time of 20 days. The Branch has also reached agreement rates of 87% for Voluntary Mediation, 67% for Mandatory Mediation and 50% for Abbreviated Mediation. Along with these civil statistics the Branch has also completed 36 Justice Mediations during the same period.

The Branch also conducts a significant amount of training and community education throughout the state. As well as training and accrediting its own panels of community mediators state-wide, the Branch provides conflict management training to a wide array of private, public and community sector organisations. During the 2003/04 financial year the Branch provided training to a total of 3383 clients. Between 1 July and 31 August 2004 the Branch had provided training to 335 individuals across the state.