

*Tabbed 15/11/11.
Manning/Serco.*

**Opening Statement to the Joint Select Committee on
Australia's Immigration Detention Network**

Adelaide, South Australia

15 November, 2011

Chris Manning

Managing Director, Serco Immigration Services

Thank you and good afternoon Chair and Committee members.

As this will be our fifth appearance, I don't intend to make a lengthy opening statement, however I think it would benefit the Committee and its deliberations to briefly outline a number of local initiatives which Serco staff are currently undertaking.

I trust the site visit to Inverbrackie APOD was informative and I hope you had the opportunity to meet some of our excellent staff.

Again I will place on record my deep appreciation for the dedication, commitment and professionalism that our employees bring to what we all acknowledge can be a challenging working environment.

Your visit to Inverbrackie APOD would have again highlighted Serco's commitment to delivering a safe and secure environment as well as providing humane and dignified services for the people in our care.

As part of an ongoing program of activities, staff at Inverbrackie recently held a talent contest with clients and staff presenting a variety of acts including dancing (both Bollywood and break-dancing), children's zumba, reading as well as gymnastics.

I'm happy to report that it was a very popular night, bringing client families together to watch the various activities and with prizes being handed out.

In addition, there are a number of activities available to clients both on and offsite and recent positive feedback from children has shown how much fun they had visiting the zoo, and in particular seeing the Australian animals.

The delivery of a range of programs and activities is a key focus for the centre and we endeavour to meet the cultural needs of all our clients, as well as providing a good understanding and knowledge of Australia.

There are very few restrictions on the types of programs and activities that we run.

Participation rates for programs and activities are consistent with clients being actively involved in consultation meetings every Monday morning.

These meetings are designed to allow clients to make suggestions as to their preferences of destination such as a beach walk, a visit to the zoo, church services and so on.

Clients choose to visit nature parks like Para Wirra, go for walks on Semaphore Beach and visit a place of worship. We also cater for trips to culturally appropriate supermarkets so that clients can buy items that they may recognise from their own countries.

At the Port Augusta IRH recently, a 'moon festival' was organised for clients and the local community to commemorate September's full moon.

Clients, staff and locals from many different cultural backgrounds took part in the celebration which involved the creation of a papier mache dragon, created by clients, including children, over a number of days.

One client alone undertook the difficult task of sewing several metres of fabric to create the dragon's body.

The day involved games on the facility's soccer pitch, a Vietnamese fashion parade with prizes for best costume, a celebratory meal and a lantern display with the specially constructed dragon.

The event showed camaraderie and optimism among the clients as well as active engagement with Serco staff.

This is just a snapshot, but I hope it provides the Committee with an insight into the service we deliver and the values that underpin how we deliver it.

Serco again welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's deliberations and I'd be happy to address your questions.

Thank you.