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Submission No 1295



BY: MLG

**Public Hearing of the
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION
WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2009
Questions on Notice**

Context of each question (from Hansard transcript) is attached.

1. How many DIAC staff are currently based on Christmas Island on an ongoing basis and on an as-needed basis, for example, in preparation for the unauthorised boat arrivals currently making their way to the island?

As at 27 March 2009, there were 34 Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) staff based on Christmas Island.

Two staff are on Christmas Island on an ongoing basis, and are involved with managing facilities, liaising with service providers and coordinating operational activities.

The remaining DIAC staff are based on Christmas Island for varying lengths of time, ranging from two weeks to several months. They are involved in infrastructure work or are part of the unauthorised boat arrival response taskforce.

3. What are the details of the Health Induction Assessment Protocols?

The Immigration Detention Instruction 'Health Induction Assessment' has recently been finalised and will be made available on the department's Legend system in May. The creation of this instruction involved a broad consultation process involving both internal and external stakeholders, including the Detention Health Advisory Group, the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office and the Australian Human Rights Commission. Although a new instruction, this document reflects current practice.

8. What is the department's current policy on moving people between detention facilities.

Response to (a)

According to the Immigration Detention Values, a person in immigration detention must be treated fairly and reasonably at all times. This includes before, during and after a transfer between immigration detention facilities. Due to the vulnerable nature of people in immigration detention, a client-centred focus is used to ensure that the needs of clients are met and discussed. A range of stakeholders are engaged when planning and organising transfers of people between immigration detention facilities.

Irrespective of the logistical complexities inherent in any transfer, the particular needs and circumstances of each client are taken into account. In addition, existing policy instructions provided to staff aim to ensure that:

- people in immigration detention are informed of any intended transfer and are able to discuss any outstanding issues or concerns;
- communication with the person in immigration detention is clear and conducted in a language the person can understand;
- people in immigration detention have access to a case manager and/or other relevant stakeholders to address any concerns about an impending transfer;
- the Client Placement Assessment process is used to determine the appropriate placement of a person in immigration detention;
- all placement decisions are fair and reasonable and are documented and recorded appropriately; and
- the actual transfer will be risk-assessed as appropriate and will be conducted in a humane manner.