

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/093) PROGRAMME – 2.1 and 2.2: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Xenophon (L&CA 71) asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Does that take into account—and, again, I am happy to take this on notice in terms of the economic modelling of it—what the long-term contribution of those refugees is in terms of becoming productive citizens of Australia? Are you able to provide details of that modelling?

Mr Bowles: We can take that on notice to see what we can provide on that one Senator.

Senator XENOPHON: I would be very interested in seeing the modelling in respect of that. The other issue is whether it also takes into account that if we do increase the humanitarian intake it may have an effect on dampening.

[...]

Mr Bowles: We look at whole-of-government costs in relation to these programs. That takes into account how long people will stay on welfare and the like, but we look at this in that whole-of-government context. So we will have a look at what we have got and provide it on notice.

Senator XENOPHON: And the behavioural economics effects. That will be useful. Thank you.

Answer:

In his research report *Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants*, commissioned by the Australian Government, Professor Graeme Hugo from the University of Adelaide, on behalf of the department, examined the variety of ways in which refugees and other humanitarian entrants contribute to Australia society.

Professor Hugo's research shows that refugees and other humanitarian entrants make an important contribution to Australia in many areas including social engagement, workforce participation, business ownership and volunteering within the community. Professor Hugo found that most refugee families, especially those in the second generation, are able to adjust effectively over time and eventually match and in many cases exceed Australian-born levels of economic and social contribution.

In addition to labour force participation, Professor Hugo's report found that humanitarian entrants:

- display greater entrepreneurial qualities compared with other migrant groups, with a higher than average proportion engaging in small and medium business enterprises

- are meeting many of the labour shortages in low skill, low status and low paid occupations
- develop and maintain economic links with their origin countries and play other roles in their home countries – which have a positive developmental impact.

The full report, released in 2011, can be accessed at www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/publications/economic-civic-and-social-contributions-of-first-and-second-generation-humanitarian-entrants