

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/123) - Community sponsor program - Benefits - Programme 2.4: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 81) asked:

Senator PRATT: Do you know what the cost to the sponsor of one refugee and one family under the pilot program has been?

Ms Lauman: Under the pilot program? Have you got the detail?

Mr Wilden: I do not have the pilot program.

Ms Lauman: The visa application charge under the pilot and under the program do not change. The visa application charge is \$2,680, with \$16,444 for the primary applicant and \$2,680 for each dependent as a secondary visa application charge—that is, a fee that is paid only on grant, if the application is successful. But under the new program there is an associated cost.

Mr Wilden: The VACs have been the same for the pilot and the new program. For the new program, the proposer also has to meet the costs of airfares, medical screening, on-arrival support such as initial accommodation, and they have to pay an assurance of support.

Senator PRATT: So what does that \$16,000 combined with \$2,680 entitle an applicant or the sponsoring organisation to receive?

Mr Wilden: I would have to check what they can actually receive under the DSS, if that is what you mean? When you say 'what can they receive', I am not sure what you are looking for there.

Senator PRATT: Is it essentially communities cross-subsidising the immigration department, or are you spending that money and pushing it back through to DSS to help with support?

Mr Wilden: The VAC—the \$16,000 and the \$2,600—goes into general revenue, so it is not tied to any particular outcome.

Senator PRATT: It is not tied to an outcome, but these sponsored people would be eligible for support through DSS.

Mr Wilden: There are a range of benefits—paid health care et cetera—that they are eligible for, but we will take on notice the full list and provide it.

Answer:

While Community Support Programme entrants will be financially and practically supported by their proposer, they will have access to a safety net of social services, including Medicare, English language tuition and employment services on the same basis as other Humanitarian entrants. Visa recipients of working age will be subject to an Assurance of Support for 12 months, whereby the proposer will be required to repay certain income support payments claimed during this period.

