

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 February 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(80) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Hurley asked:

2004-2005 DIMA annual report p.173 reports about development of a national regionally based needs-based planning framework

- Has this needs based planning framework been completed?
- Who is responsible for organising this framework?
- Can you provide a detailed report on the progress or outcome of the needs based framework?

Answer:

Needs-based planning and the development of a planning framework have been implemented in response to recommendations made in the *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*, published in May 2003.

Comprehensive needs-based planning was undertaken in 2005. As a result, a package of Settlement Needs information was compiled and published on DIMA's website in October 2005. It formed part of the release of the 2006-07 Applicant Information Package for the new Settlement Grants Program. It was provided to assist organisations to target their funding applications towards those communities and locations most in need of settlement assistance.

The information consists of a concise National Priority Settlement Needs report and, in addition, Settlement Profiles for each state and territory. These provide detailed information on settlement needs in each state and territory, including demographic settlement data and information on a range of settlement needs including employment, health and community development. Updated Settlement Needs information will be published in May/June of each year (including 2006) on DIMA's website and will be launched through presentations to state and territory governments.

Development of the National Framework for Settlement Planning (the Framework) is the responsibility of the Department. The Framework has been developed by DIMA's National Office in consultation with DIMA's State and Territory Offices and the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council. The Framework will be published by the end of March 2006.

The Framework aims to provide a more strategic and coordinated approach to national settlement planning. It will enable the early identification of settlement needs and facilitate improved communication between settlement stakeholders. The Framework will also clarify the roles and responsibilities of different settlement stakeholders and will provide a clear process for articulating and addressing emerging settlement issues.

The Framework identifies key stakeholders including clients, community organisations, service providers and governments, and highlights the importance of their contribution to the settlement planning process.

As part of the Framework, a National Settlement Planning Committee has been established at the DIMA National Office level. Membership consists of key program areas in DIMA that intersect with and inform settlement planning. The Committee will undertake a strategic approach that responds in a consultative and coordinated manner to settlement issues.

DIMA is also developing a range of information products for settlement stakeholders that will assist them to plan for and provide services to new arrivals. These include:

- annual Settlement Needs Reports for each state and territory providing demographic data, forecasts of likely arrivals and information on settlement needs;
- selected Community Profiles of new and emerging humanitarian communities that enable settlement service providers and government agencies to better understand complex client needs; and
- an internal Settlement Planning and Information Newsletter which will update State and Territory Offices on national settlement issues and initiatives.