

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 12 February 2007

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(66) Output 1.2: Refugee and Humanitarian Entry and Stay

Senator Hurley (L&CA 84-85) asked:

Provide detailed information on how the AUSCO programme is provided.

Answer:

The Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) Programme operates in four regions: Africa, South Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East. Additional courses are provided in other regions as required.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is contracted to deliver the course on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The new three year AUSCO contract commenced in September 2006.

AUSCO is available to all refugee and special humanitarian entrants over five years of age and is usually delivered over five days to ensure that topics are covered in sufficient detail.

The AUSCO course is delivered pre-departure and it provides an initial introduction to aspects of Australian life which aims to enhance entrants' settlement prospects, create realistic expectations for their life in Australia and help entrants acquire information concerning Australian culture prior to arrival. AUSCO is not intended to replace the onshore services provided through the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy.

AUSCO provides practical advice about travel to Australia, information about Australian life and culture, provides the opportunity to ask questions about topics such as education, employment and the law, and the opportunity to meet other people who are also making a new life in Australia.

Topics covered during the course include:

- An overview of Australia including government, geography and climate
- Cultural adjustment
- Travel to Australia
- Settling in
- Healthcare
- Education
- The importance of learning English in Australia
- Finding a job
- Money management

- Housing
- Transport
- Australian law (including the role of police)
- Australian values
- Access to trauma and torture counselling

AUSCO teachers utilise a variety of teaching methods throughout the course including brainstorming, simulations, case studies, debates, discussions, problem solving and role plays. The Department also provides classroom and reference materials such as videos and DVDs, maps, posters, newspapers, books about Australia and information on key community services such as Centrelink, Quarantine, Banking, and Policing, in order to maximise the learning experience for the participants.

The AUSCO course curriculum is based on the *A New Country- A New Life Information Kit* which provides standard information about Australia which is then tailored to the needs of the client groups in each region.