

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 FEBRUARY 2009**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

### **(42) Output 1.5: Detention**

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

(1) What are the unit costs per week per detainee (these costs should include all peripheral service costs; air charters, transport, legal advice, community services, housing rentals, policing, barge hire and education etc.) in total for the detention of Asylum Seekers on Christmas Island for:

(a) North West Point DIAC Christmas Island Immigration Detention Centre?

(b) DIAC Construction Camp facility?

(c) DIAC Phosphate Hill Facility?

(d) Community detention located at Drum Site?

(2) What are the projected costs of detaining or housing asylum seekers on the Australian mainland?

*Answer:*

(1) Since the commencement of the recent boat arrivals on 2 October 2008, the Department and its relevant service providers have utilised the full range of available Departmental facilities on Christmas Island. As part of the Department's commitment to provide the most appropriate care for this caseload, facilities have been used flexibly and people in immigration detention have been accommodated in a wide range of settings.

Consequently, costs are not being captured on a facility by facility basis or on a unit cost per week per detainee basis. Rather, the Department is billed on the basis of services delivered on the Island as opposed to where on the Island those services were delivered

In response to a question raised at the Estimates Hearing of 21 October 2008 we provided a range of information relating to the costs of processing people detained on Christmas Island.

The Department is able to provide an update of the costs to cover the period 2 October 2008 to 28 February 2009. These are:

- Detention Services Provider approximately \$6,500 per day;
- Interpreting services approximately \$9,945 per day, and

- Additional DIAC staff costs and allowances, approximately \$7,850 per day.

In addition, aircraft charter costs of approximately \$1.7m have been incurred during the period.

These costs are based on invoices received and paid and are additional to the annual costs. They are also highly variable depending on the number of people on the island and the range of services provided. Delays in service providers submitting invoices for payment also affect the variability of these costs.

(2) In respect of projected costs regarding detention on the Australian mainland, these costs depend on the type of immigration detention, the number of people housed, the location of that housing, the quantity and range of services consumed and the contractual arrangements that apply. As such, it is difficult to project these costs with any degree of certainty.

However, and by way of example based on 2007-08 financial year data, across the full range of detention options, average mainland costs ranged from \$162.00 per person per day in Community Detention to \$539.00 per person per day in Immigration Residential Housing. These costs were over and above fixed costs.