

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(226) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network

Senator Cash asked:

- 1) Has the Department undertaken an analysis of the economic impact on the town as a result of the decision to keep detainees at the Scherger air base?
- 2) When did the Department inform the local community of their decision to extend the time frame?
- 3) What community consultation took place by the Department with the community in relation to this decision?

Answer:

- (1) No
- (2) A formal announcement was made by the Minister on 3 March 2011. Prior to the announcement the Department and the Minister personally contacted a number of community leaders and representatives who expressed their support for the decision.
- (3) The Department and the Minister received representations from a number of community leaders and representatives asking for a decision to be taken to extend the Scherger operations beyond 30 June 2011. The local community met with the Minister on 2 Feb 2011 and expressed their strong support for the ongoing immigration presence at Scherger. These views had already been expressed to the Department for some time, and the support in the local community has continued since the announcement. Organisations consulted about the impacts of the decision include: the Weipa Town Authority, traditional owners (including the Napranum Town Council), Rio Tinto, local religious leaders, the Wester Cape College, Queensland Government representatives, local shopkeepers/traders and commercial accommodation providers.