

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(318) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

The Ombudsman at page 5 of the report suggests that the Department was clear about its own objectives – can you please tell us what those objectives are with respect to Christmas Island?

Answer:

Departmental policy and Departmental officers working with clients in immigration detention are guided by the Government's seven key immigration detention values. These are as follows:

1. Mandatory detention is an essential component of strong border control.
2. To support the integrity of Australia's immigration program, three groups will be subject to mandatory detention:
 - a. all unauthorised arrivals, for management of health, identity and security risks to the community;
 - b. unlawful non-citizens who present unacceptable risks to the community; and
 - c. unlawful non-citizens who have repeatedly refused to comply with their visa conditions.
3. Children, including juvenile foreign fishers and, where possible, their families, will not be detained in an immigration detention centre.
4. Detention that is indefinite or otherwise arbitrary is not acceptable and the length and conditions of detention, including the appropriateness of both the accommodation and the services provided, would be subject to regular review.
5. Detention in immigration detention centres is only to be used as a last resort and for the shortest practicable time.
6. People in detention will be treated fairly and reasonably within the law.
7. Conditions of detention will ensure the inherent dignity of the human person.