

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(AE12/0246) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance**

Senator Hanson-Young (L&CA 65) asked:

In regards to unaccompanied minors in detention, what guidelines and what factors does the department consider to ensure that assessments are as 'prompt' as possible, as per the decision of the court?

*Answer:*

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship considers all relevant legal obligations and policy frameworks in regards to unaccompanied minors in detention. It is departmental policy that unaccompanied minors are given a high processing priority when being allocated. Unaccompanied minors have access to advice through the Immigration Advice and Application Scheme (IAAAS).

Training provided to departmental officers who undertake the protection interviews includes discussion of unaccompanied minors by subject matter experts in several of the sessions. Best practice on interviewing unaccompanied minors in detention is also addressed during this training.

Further written advice and guidance is available to decision-makers in the Protection Visa Procedural Advice Manual and the Protection Obligations Evaluation manual.

The factors considered in an unaccompanied minors protection assessment include:

- access to an independent adult support person (other than the IAAAS) provider);
- child sensitive questioning techniques;
- the child's age, language development and maturity; and
- the effect of any traumatic events on the child.