

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0385) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

MARIBYRNONG- I refer to the article in the online Herald Sun of 18 January 2012 entitled "Detention Staff detail Drug Use and Assaults" - What discussions has the Department had with SERCO regarding the nature of the complaints? Has or will the Department be undertaking an investigation into the allegations? In relation to the allegation that "Officers were given no training to deal with a former prisoner and heroin addict," what is meant by "former prisoner"? Have any concerns relating to the use of drugs or the importation of drugs in the detention centre been raised with the Department? If so, please outline the nature of the complaints?

Answer:

The Department has had discussions with Serco about the complaints including staff safety, client transfers and behavioural management plans for clients.

Serco undertook an internal investigation into the allegations.

Serco provides training to all officers on dealing with aggressive or violent people, which may include former prisoners. This training covers awareness of illegal substances, officer safety while dealing with aggressive clients, managing conflict through negotiation, use of reasonable force as a last resort, and defensive techniques.

The definition of 'former prisoner' would be one for the author of the article.

Yes, Serco has reported their concerns with drug-related matters involving a small number of clients to the Department. Serco are also required to report these matters to the relevant police force.