

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0444) Program 5.1: Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Cash asked:

The Richmond report states at page 10 /11: “At a time of increased numbers, larger than previous surges and significant changes in the characteristics of the Irregular Maritime Arrival cohort, the right balance is important. There is a real risk that the HSS model will continue to have difficulty in coping with and responding to the needs of single adult males and Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors and may require modification. At the same time recent DIAC initiatives such as community detention and programs for unaccompanied minors which also involve outsourcing to Providers may increase DIAC’s coordination risks in and around HSS. Irrespective however, of enhancements to the service delivery model under HSS or elsewhere, critical elements which require improvement are the DIAC placement referral policies and procedures as clients are managed from detention to the community.” Has the Department identified a shift in housing needs? If yes, what are the expected needs?

Answer:

Over the past six months, there has been an increase in irregular maritime arrivals, a significant portion of whom are single adult men. Previously the Humanitarian Settlement Services cohort was comprised mainly of family groups.

The most appropriate form of accommodation for single adult clients is shared accommodation and, as a result, this is in greater demand. We expect this trend to continue.

There has been a corresponding increase in the number of settlement placements required for unaccompanied humanitarian minors (UHMs). The impact on housing needs is slight, as it is mitigated by the fact that UHMs are either accommodated with private links in Australia (that is, close relatives or friends), with foster carers or in group homes. The Refugee Youth Support Pilot, which commenced in February 2012, is trialling three different share housing models for UHMs. Through the Pilot, UHMs will be supported to source long-term and affordable accommodation in group housing arrangements.