

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0445) 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. (a) What is being done to meet this demand? (b) How many single adult male HSS clients are living alone? (b) How many are housed in groups? (c) Of these what type of dwelling are they residing in?"

Answer:

- (a) The referral policy is to ensure that those linked by close family relationships (child/spouse/parent) with a person already in Australia are referred to the same location, unless the client requests not to be located there or if they have special medical or other needs unable to be met from that location. Where possible, other links, such as with friends or organisations, are also given the same consideration.

Clients who declare no close links in Australia are assessed for referral to a Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) settlement location that offers the strongest possible fit for their particular needs and backgrounds. First consideration is given to those locations in regional Australia where there are people who speak the same language and can offer support from within the same ethnic community as the client.

Further factors that are considered in the referral decision-making process include a service provider's capacity to assist clients within the required time frames and current accommodation capacity of a particular location.

- (b) Once a client moves beyond initial short-term accommodation, they move to a standard housing model where, like many Australians, they take out leases, board, share accommodation or live with family and friends. As they are permanent residents, the department no longer has reporting requirements

from them and therefore hard accommodation data such as that requested is not collected or held by DIAC.

- (c) HSS service providers have a range of housing models including reception centres, flats, houses, shared houses and housed with links.