

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0446) 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) "Who monitors how many persons are in each property? (b) Does properties have a tenancy agreement? (c) Is this the case for both short and long term housing?"

Answer:

- (a) Under the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) contract, service providers must ensure that all accommodation it provides to or arranges for clients complies with all applicable building regulations, and Commonwealth, State or Territory tenancy laws. When sourcing properties for HSS clients, the service provider must therefore consider the number of occupants living in the accommodation to ensure there is no breach of the relevant property and occupancy laws.
- (b) Each client in long-term accommodation (LTA) sourced by the service provider must have a tenancy agreement in place and understand their rights and responsibilities as tenants.
- (c) Under the HSS contract, where clients cannot be placed directly in LTA, service providers are required to source short-term accommodation (STA) for clients. As part of this, service providers must provide clients with a verbal and written explanation of the conditions of their stay in the STA in a language understood by the client, and seek agreement from the client to comply with these conditions. Where permitted or required by state or territory residential tenancy laws, the service provider must provide the client with a standard tenancy agreement. There is no such requirement for clients residing in particular types of STA such as where STA clients are in hotel or motel accommodation or where the lease for the STA is held by the service provider.