

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0449) 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.” What is the placement and referral process?

Answer:

Referral is a client-centric process that attempts to achieve the best possible fit between a client’s background and strengths, and the attributes of the initial settlement location.

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 timeframes and current accommodation capacity of a particular location.