

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0489) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network

Senator Abetz asked:

Detention: What do the descriptors, non-prescribed medication, green leaf matter, and smoking implement mean? What was the nature of the smoking implement identified that made it contraband?: Does the descriptor 'green leaf matter' refer to peppermint tea or does it refer to a substance that might be inhaled if lit? Why do we have such euphemistic titles? What is meant by the term 'non-permitted item'? Was it a rifle or a knife?

Answer:

The descriptors are entered in departmental systems by the detention service provider (DSP) at the time the item is confiscated, as required under the contract. Where the DSP locates an item they suspect may not be permitted under Australian law, it would be confiscated and referred to authorities.

The DSP is not qualified to test substances to determine whether they are benign or illegal. When reporting these items, the DSP uses a term that appropriately describes the item without making a judgement as to its actual composition (such as 'green leaf matter'). Similarly, the DSP is not qualified to determine the specific name for each smoking implement located so the term 'smoking implement' is used.

The term 'non-prescribed medication' is used to describe medication which has been located in the possession of an individual that was not prescribed that medication.