

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21-22 May 2007**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

### **(177) Output 1.6: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management**

Senator Ludwig asked:

Phones in Nauru can go out of order regularly, how is the Australian Government addressing this problem to ensure that phone communications with asylum seekers are not obstructed? Are recurrent problems with the Telstra Network in Nauru being addressed?

*Answer:*

The International Organisation for Migration, which manages the OPC in Nauru, provides the following communication options to asylum seekers residing in the centre:

- A direct line for incoming calls. This number is monitored full time by an IOM operations assistant.
- A direct line for incoming faxes.
- An Australian e-Fax. This works even if phone lines are down as it sends fax via email to an address connected to the IOM VSAT network. Faxes are printed out and distributed as they arrive.
- A dedicated email address. Emails are printed out and given to whomever they are addressed to.
- There are 3 public telephones available in the OPC. Asylum seekers are provided with a \$50 phone card each month.
- IOM will be providing asylum seekers with internet access via 4 PCs in the computer room at the OPC.

Both RONTTEL and Telstra overseas connections are available in Nauru. However, due to congestion and old equipment these networks are unreliable. The recurrent problems with RONTTEL, which is a Nauru Government owned business enterprise, are a matter for the Government of Nauru to address.