



Media release

Senator Chris Evans

Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

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Commitment to improve detention

The Rudd Government will deliver on its commitment to redevelop Villawood Immigration Detention Centre, as part of an overall promise to improve immigration detention accommodation.

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, said today a \$1.1 million feasibility study for the redevelopment of the Villawood centre will be conducted in 2008-09.

The redevelopment study will follow the completion in 2007-08 of capital works on the new Christmas Island detention centre and immigration transit accommodation in Brisbane and Melbourne.

“Villawood was originally constructed as an immigration hostel in 1949 and the aged infrastructure does not provide appropriate amenity for people in detention or for visitors and staff,” Senator Evans said.

While the facility on Christmas Island will be the main centre for processing future unauthorised boat arrivals now that the Nauru and Manus Island centres have closed, Villawood is the primary onshore detention facility.

The Budget also provides for a \$5.6 million, 12-month extension to the Case Management and Community Care Pilot program which provides targeted assistance to people while their immigration status is resolved.

The program provides practical support for health and welfare needs, offers immigration information and counselling on options for return to home country and also provides independent migration advice.

This assistance also includes provision of short-term accommodation, basic living allowance payments and coordinating medical health checks.

“With funding arrangements through organisations such as the International Organization for Migration, the Australian Red Cross and Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme providers this program has demonstrated that early intervention, together with targeted assistance, is critical in achieving better immigration outcomes,” Senator Evans said.

These measures should be seen as a key component in the Rudd Government’s commitment to return integrity to the Australia’s migration system.

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