

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 MAY 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(69) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

Are the religious needs of Muslim clients being catered for? For example: Have any Muslim clients been taken to the island's mosque?

Were any of the Muslim clients allowed to participate in the island community's celebrations for the Prophet's birthday in March this year?

Answer:

The religious needs of Muslim clients are catered for. Clients have been provided with prayer rooms, prayer mats and copies of the Holy Koran.

Representatives of the Christmas Island Islamic Council, including the Imam, have visited the clients at the facilities on Christmas Island. Additionally, the President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Inc, Mr Ikebal Patel, visited the Christmas Island Immigration Detention Centre in March 2009.

Clients have been offered the opportunity to attend the Christmas Island Mosque. To date, that offer has not been taken up.

Muslim clients did not participate in the island community's celebrations for the Prophet's birthday in March this year. Instead, celebrations were held at the Immigration Detention Centre with local Muslim representatives present and the provision of special foods.