

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 MAY 2009

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(71) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management**

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

1. How often are clients allowed to make outside calls? What is the length of these calls?
2. Are clients allowed mobile phones inside the centre as in the case of mainland detention facilities?
3. Are there any books inside the centre's library? If so, have they been donated or are they provided for by G4S?
4. Have there been any problems with the internet facilities for client use? Does it always work? How many hours are clients allowed to use the internet?

*Answer:*

- (1) Currently, upon initial arrival at Christmas Island, clients are placed in restricted detention to protect the integrity of the entry interview process and other interviews conducted by border security agencies. During this period, clients are able to contact family to inform them of their whereabouts and that they are safe. These calls are usually quite brief, but length is dependent on the personal circumstances of the client.

Once restricted detention ends, clients have access to public telephones in the accommodation areas. It is a requirement under the Detention Services Contract that the Services Provider is required to arrange reasonable access to the means of communicating with family, diplomatic or consular representatives or lawyers. Additionally, clients may purchase international phone cards through points accrued in the Purchasing Allowance Scheme (PAS). These calls are unmonitored and there are no restrictions on the duration or destination of the calls, including calls to the clients' migration agents or lawyers.

- (2) Yes.
- (3) As at 15 June 2009, the library at the Christmas Island Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) has 2254 publications. These include fiction novels, religious texts, dictionaries, atlases and English educational resources, in a variety of languages. Further books are currently awaiting shipment in Perth.

The majority of books have been purchased by G4S. Other resources have been donated by volunteers and the Christmas Island High School.

- (4) The internet facilities available for client use occasionally encounter reception difficulties which affect similar services elsewhere on Christmas Island. These are, however, limited and do not impact significantly on clients' access.

To ensure equitable use, each client is allocated 40 minutes of internet use per day.