

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 MAY 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(75) Program 5.1 Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

Has there been any thought given to providing some sort of grants fund to specialised service delivery agencies who work with refugees and asylum seekers, particularly in the areas of health, accommodation, employment advice, community orientation, and legal advice?

Answer:

The Department has a comprehensive range of settlement programs to assist migrants and humanitarian entrants to settle and integrate as soon as possible after arrival.

The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) provides initial, intensive settlement assistance for humanitarian entrants for up to 12 months after arrival, at a cost of some \$60 million annually. This includes help connecting to Centrelink, doctors and schools, community orientation and assistance finding a home.

The Settlement Grants Program (SGP) provides organisations with funding to deliver settlement services to recently arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants with identified needs at a cost of approximately \$34 million annually. This includes practical support like homework clubs and driver education, among many other projects.

The Complex Case Support (CCS) program delivers specialised and intensive case management services to recently humanitarian entrants with exceptional needs. The service provides additional support to clients whose needs extend beyond the scope of core settlement services (such as IHSS and the SGP).

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides English language tuition for eligible adult migrants and humanitarian entrants who do not have functional English. In 2009-10 the AMEP budget, including the new Employment Pathways and Traineeships in English and Work Readiness programs is \$208.9 million.

A small Sustainable Regional Settlement grants program has been introduced to assist organisations to improve the sustainability of humanitarian settlement in regional areas. Funding for this initiative is up to \$150 000 annually.

The Government provides a national translating and interpreting service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is provided to give non-English speakers access to information and services.

The Government recently launched the new Diverse Australia Program following a departmental review of the Living in Harmony Program. The program tackles incidents of racism as well as cultural and religious intolerance.

The Department also funds the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme that provides living support and the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme that provides application assistance to asylum seekers.