

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 23-24 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0517) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network

Senator Cash (L&CA 107) asked:

In relation to a phone bill for \$259,455 for Scherger, confirm whether or not there are detainees calling home at taxpayers' expense within that figure.

Answer:

The costs associated with clients calling home are not included in the phone bill for \$259 455.

People accommodated at Scherger Immigration Detention Centre can make phone calls home using prepaid phone cards.

People in immigration detention receive up to 50 points per week which can be used to purchase phone cards and other items.

Included in this phone bill are calls from departmental officers, the detention service provider and the medical service providers, as well as interpreting services and other calls relating to casework and the operation of the centre.

The charges also cover the cost of the associated hardware such as handsets and line rentals.

Department of Defence phone calls, which are made from the same system, are included in this total.