

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(108) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Kirk asked:

Why was the IDCU report ignored after it had been commissioned by Australia? Is the Minister willing to provide all reports, emails and other correspondence surrounding the IDCU investigation for scrutiny?

Answer:

Advice provided to DIMIA by the IDCU through the Afghan Embassy has never been ignored.

The Identity Checking Unit (IDCU) is an agency of the Afghan Government that provides identity verification services for the Afghan Government. Australia and other donors through the International Organisation for Migration have provided financial support to establish and operate the IDCU.

Australian support for this activity is on the public record, having been referred to in a number of parliamentary committees, court proceedings and a Ministerial Media Release.

The only evidence the Afghan authorities need to provide to Australia is their formal Statement of Identity indicating that they consider the persons concerned are Afghan nationals. It is for the Afghan Government to make this judgement.

Even if the Afghan Government were to issue a Statement of Identity for members of the Bakhtiyari family it would not change the fact that they have been found by the Government of Pakistan to be nationals of Pakistan.

DIMIA has not received Statements of Identity from the Afghan Government indicating that any of the Bakhtiyari family are citizens of Afghanistan.

Attached are copies of documents provided to the IDCU.