

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(141) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Nettle asked:

1. Is the Department aware of an open letter from the women kept in the LIMA compound at Villawood detention centre requesting that the barriers to the other compound be removed?
2. Has the Department or GSL responded or considered this request? Has there been a response to the female detainees?
3. Has the Department or GSL considered extending the hours that the gate between compounds is open.

Answer:

1. The department is aware of the letter referred to.
2. A response was provided to the detainees through the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

The department is not actively considering the removal of the fence between Lima and Stage 2 compounds.

The Lima compound houses female detainees of varying security levels: high risk to low risk. While the Lima compound is located within Stage 2, it is considered as a separate unit to enable female detainees to have a safe and secure environment separate from the predominately male population in Stage 2.

The residents of Lima compound are not limited to that area. They are able to go into the Stage 2 compound on a daily basis to mix with other detainees, participate in the activities conducted there and use the facilities, as long as they are monitored by GSL (Australia) Pty Ltd (GSL) staff.

3. The residents of Lima compound are not limited to that area. As Lima compound is within Stage 2, and the areas share many facilities such as the dining room, visits area and education areas, communication between detainees in Lima and Stage 2 compounds is not restricted.