

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 01 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(94) Output : 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Kirk asked:

In the wake of the Cornelia Rau affair, what steps are being taken to educate staff at detention centres as to signs of mental illness or distress, and when to notify health care professionals?

Answer:

All staff who work with detainees in detention facilities are trained by the detention service provider (GSL) to recognise and respond to the warning signs and risk factors of mental health and self harm.

In addition, Professional Support Services (contractors for psychology services to immigration detention centres) have developed a one day course covering mental health issues in the detention environment. This course will raise understanding of mental health issues and further develop the skills of all staff. The course will cover topics such as:

- how to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health conditions;
- how to develop appropriate responses to detainees with mental health conditions; and
- how PSS deliver services in the detention environment.

The first course will be available in December 2005 and will be evaluated.