

**OPENING STATEMENT
ESTIMATES, OCTOBER 2006**

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ATTACHMENT: PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE PALMER PROGRAMME

Initiative	Status
<i>Being more open and accountable</i>	
Governance and Assurance	A key development in the last six months has been the implementation of the DIMA Plan, which provides the department with a service focus for integrating policy, programmes and delivery, and clear strategic priorities. Delivery of the enhanced internal audit programme is ongoing, complemented now by development and circulation of a departmental Quality Assurance Framework to better ensure that mistakes and errors are being identified and rectified.
Re-tendering for the Department's Detention Services Contract	The department will re-tender for Detention Services and Detention Health Services in 2007. In preparation for the tender, the Department has developed a new service delivery model based on DIMA's themes of: an open and accountable organisation; fair and reasonable dealings with clients; and well trained and supported staff. The model will provide the basis for how the services are to be delivered to meet the needs of our clients. Significant stakeholder and industry consultations have been undertaken over the past few months with positive feedback on the reforms to detention. The delivery of health care and psychological services was novated from the current Detention Services contract on the 1st of October 2006 to allow DIMA to directly engage with the health providers to support a greater focus on the individual needs of clients.
Immigration Detention Advisory Group (IDAG)	IDAG's capacity to provide advice on detention related matters has been improved with an expanded role in day to day business, including involvement with the Detention Services Steering Committee, the Detention Health and Long Term Detention Strategies, and the Detention Services Contract review. IDAG has been expanded by the appointment of an additional member, Tsbin Tchen.

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By: H. Andrew Metcalfe - DIMA Secretary

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Stakeholder relationships	The Secretary and other executives continue high level engagement with organisations that have an interest in DIMA operations. The Secretary regularly writes to external stakeholders to keep them informed of issues in which they may have an interest and inviting feedback. A systematic approach to mapping the department's stakeholders has been commenced, to ensure that the department remains engaged with all relevant parties. The Secretary has appointed a principal adviser on community and stakeholder engagement. The Minister tabled a 12 month progress report on the Palmer Programme on 12 September 2006, which is also available on the DIMA website.
<i>Fairer and more reasonable dealings with clients</i>	
Client service improvement programme	DIMA's Client Service Improvement Programme is one of the strategic priorities within the DIMA Plan. The Programme was launched by our Minister in June and is underpinned by the Client Service Charter. The Charter was developed through extensive consultations with clients and other stakeholders, and explains our commitment to clients, what they can expect from us, and how they can provide feedback.
Client satisfaction surveys	A client research framework has been developed to guide departmental decisions about intended outcomes, processes and priorities for undertaking research and surveying clients over the next 18 months. This will enable us to have a targeted approach to talking to our clients based on their specific circumstances and preferences through the appropriate process and methodology.
Centralise client feedback mechanisms	Client compliments, suggestions and complaints are vital to improving the quality of our information, products and services. The department has centralised the processing of all feedback through the Global Feedback Unit. This unit collects, analyses and reports on all forms of feedback, including telephone calls, web-based feedback and mail. Progressive roll-out of an IT system to assist automate processes commenced at the start of this month. A comprehensive Client Feedback Framework that will integrate all elements of client feedback received in the Department will be implemented over the next 12 months.

Community care pilot	The Community Care pilot programme commenced in May in Sydney and Melbourne and will run for twelve months. The pilot programme has two main components: community assistance, which will be provided through the Australian Red Cross (ARC), and an immigration information and counselling service, to be provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A third component provides for limited migration advice for a small target client group. The pilot programme involves case managers coordinating a range of immigration information and community care services, on an individual needs basis to vulnerable clients who are not covered by existing programmes, or whose exceptional circumstances cannot be met by an existing programme.
Case management framework	The National Case Management Framework has been finalised, providing a holistic approach to managing clients who have complex circumstances or are vulnerable, ensuring an appropriate immigration outcome in a timely, lawful and reasonable manner. The initial 15 qualified case managers in Sydney and Melbourne has now been expanded to 35, and will expand to 50 nationwide during the 2007-08 financial year.
Onshore Detention Strategy	A new Onshore Detention Strategy was funded in the May Budget, and work has started on implementing the strategy. The Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation Centres will be the first of three new hostel-style accommodation centres to be established under the strategy, with stage 1 completion expected in mid 2007. A residential housing centre in Sydney was opened by the Minister on 1 August 2006. This is the second of three; the original one is in Port Augusta and the third, in Perth, will be completed by December this year. Significant upgrades to Baxter have been implemented and comprehensive refurbishments of our Maribyrnong (Melbourne) and Perth detention centres are underway. All of this provides a greater range of placement options for people who are detained.
24/7 hotline for police and consular inquiries regarding immigration status	The 24/7 hotline facility known as the Immigration Status Service commenced operation in February and has been progressively rolled out to police services, embassies and high commissions, becoming fully functional in July. The hotline provides police nationally with an avenue to make inquiries into the immigration status of individuals, and a contact point and referral service for the staff of Australian-based diplomatic missions in relation to their nationals who may be in detention.

Identity verification	The expanded National Identity Verification and Advice Section has been in operation for some time, conducting complex identity investigations and providing oversight and support for identity establishment practices. Cases are monitored to ensure that attempts to establish identity have not stalled, and monthly statistics are gathered to identify trends and any areas of concern.
<i>Well trained and supported staff</i>	
Key Migration Series Instructions (MSIs)	The key instructions guiding compliance and detention officers in establishing identity and visa status have been reviewed, and most will have been amended as necessary by the end of 2006. A broader project is addressing all departmental policy instructions, under which all remaining MSIs will be reviewed during the course of 2007 and revised or replaced as appropriate.
Systems for People	In June DIMA announced that a consortium led by IBM had been appointed as the strategic partner to help implement the \$495 million <i>Systems for People</i> programme of work. In September the programme delivered its first enhancements, including: an upgrade to the Humanitarian Entrant Management System; a new intranet for staff; and the initial release of a person centric search facility, which will improve staff's client searching capabilities by enabling simultaneous search across a number of departmental systems. Further enhancements are planned for 90 day intervals, with the first role-based portals for staff to be delivered in April 2007.
DIMA College of Immigration	The DIMA College of Immigration has been established to provide training for individuals in key roles including compliance and detention officers. The College curriculum is being developed with careful attention to the recommendations of the Palmer and Comrie inquiries. Mr Mick Palmer has accepted an appointment as Chair of the College Board. The first course offered through the College, the Compliance Officer Pilot Course, is now complete and participants have moved on to the workplace component of their training. The Detention Officer Pilot commenced on 16 October and the second Compliance Course will commence on 6 November.
Records Management Improvement Programme	Improvements implemented include the successful upgrade of the department's records management system in July 2006. Recordkeeping Policy and Guidelines have been reviewed and updated and a Managing Records booklet has been distributed to all staff. Recordkeeping training has been incorporated into a number of training programmes within the training college curriculum, the induction program, compliance training program, the detention program and the overseas training course.