

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 OCTOBER 2008

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(49) Output 1.5: Detention

Senator Fierravanti-Wells (L&CA 98) asked:

Provide details of those 26 program initiatives that are going to be changed (to implement the new detention values).

Answer:

The Department identified 26 initiatives or projects to implement the Government's new detention values.

Seventeen of these directly related to matters raised by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship in his speech of 29 July 2008 and cover:

- ensuring that children are not detained in an immigration detention centre;
- reviewing all current detainees, applying the same principles used during the Minister's review of the 72 people held in long-term immigration detention;
- implementing a new senior officer review for people in detention every three months;
- seeking to establish a review of detainees by the Ombudsman's Office after a period such as six months;
- undertaking stakeholder consultation and public communication activity on the Government's New Directions in Detention;
- considering arrangements to apply the onus on the Department to justify the decision to detain an unlawful non-citizen;
- reviewing the arrangements in place for the handling of persons who apply for protection at the border;
- strengthening arrangements to allow for the release of unauthorised arrivals when their immigration detention is no longer required for the management of health, identity and security risks to the Australian community;
- introducing access to legal advice, independent review, oversight by the Immigration Ombudsman and procedural fairness for people who arrive unauthorised at an excised offshore place and claim protection;
- reviewing current detention infrastructure resources to give greater flexibility of usage and a wider range of placement options;
- exploring community support options for clients in community based detention, or who are vulnerable and in the community on a Bridging visa;

- completion of tenders and contract negotiations with successful tenderers for implementing the new detention health and service providers;
- leading whole-of-government contingency planning for responses to surges in unauthorised boat arrivals and disaster recovery;
- implementing the principle of using the least restrictive detention environment, commensurate with risks to the community;
- exploring widened access to and use of community based alternatives to detention in an immigration detention centre;
- completing urgent interim works at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre and progressing redevelopment of that centre; and
- refocussing compliance resources to status resolution for clients, including through client engagement strategies and the use of Assisted Voluntary Return and other services available under the Community Care Pilot.

Three initiatives covered matters that could be associated with the new values and are subject to further consultation with the Minister's office about whether they should be pursued.

Six initiatives covered matters associated with the Department implementing the values such as its management of associated systems changes and internal planning arrangements.