QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 OCTOBER 2008

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(77) Output 1.2:   Refugee and Humanitarian Entry and Stay

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Please outline the nature of any training or exchange services operated by foreign governments which are available to Australian Immigration officials. Which, if any of these training programs have Australian officials participated in for the 2007-08 period?

Answer:

The Five Country Conference (Australia, Canada, US, UK, New Zealand) conducts an annual Officer Exchange Program. Each country nominates a representative (usually at the equivalent of our Director level) to participant in the program, which is hosted by the country organising the plenary meeting. The exchange is usually of one month duration and each country covers its own participant's fares, allowances and accommodation. In the 2007-08 program year Australia hosted the first Officer Exchange Program. The Australian participant acted as a guide for the other officers. The US will host the exchange in 2008-09.

Australia and Canada exchange immigration officials between the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). The aim of secondments is to provide the opportunity to build bilateral relations, share information and gain expertise in the field of migration. These exchanges occur under an agreement signed between DIAC and CBSA in August 2006 and one DIAC officer participated in 2007-08.

In August 2008, Australia was invited to send two officers to participate in Singapore's Immigration & Checkpoints Competencies Training Programme. This was a two-week course that Singapore makes available to a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific.

The June 2008 Memorandum of Understanding between DIAC and the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on border management, integration and migration matters provides for personnel exchanges between DIAC and DHS to learn from each other's policies, processes and best practice.