

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(286) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

(1) Did the Government consult with State Governments about the decision to release families into the community prior to making its announcement? What was the nature of the consultation?

(2) What has been the response of individual Premiers? Have they raised any concerns, if so what?

(3) Have they been briefed on the level of health and other services that they will need to provide this group of people?

Answer:

(1) Residence determination arrangements have been in operation as an alternative to facility-based detention since mid 2005 and were initiated by the Howard Government at that time.

(2) This issue has not been specifically canvassed with Premiers. The Department continues to work cooperatively with all relevant state and territory agencies to ensure a smooth transition.

(3) Yes. The Department has provided full briefing on relevant health care and other services since the Government's announcement of 18 October 2010. As for all people in immigration detention, the health and medical needs of these clients will be provided by the Department's contracted health service provider and through memorandums of understanding with state and territory health agencies.