

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(293) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

(1) Based on the Government's statement that unaccompanied minors are to be released into the community, what will happen to the current 382 unaccompanied minors? Who will be appointed as their guardian?

(2) What role will State Government departments have in providing carers and accommodation?

(3) Has the Government discussed these issues with State Governments?

(4) What kind of accommodation is available to them?

(5) How will this affect accommodation shortages for vulnerable homeless Australian youth?

Answer:

(1) Unaccompanied minors remain under the guardianship of the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship in accordance with *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946*. Daily care will be provided by a range of qualified care organisations under sub-contract arrangements with the Australian Red Cross as lead agency. This will take the form of culturally appropriate full-time live-in cultural support workers (carers) and support staff and access for the minors to food, clothing, education, health and essential household needs. All contractors working with children have undergone 'working with children' checks.

(2) None.

(3 to 5) The Department continues to liaise with relevant State Government agencies with regard to progressing residence determination arrangements.

No public housing or housing leased by public housing trusts will be used for residence determination. Where offered, the Department may consider the use of accommodation supplied by churches or not-for-profit organisations where it is not currently being used for other purposes. Other accommodation will be obtained from the private rental market. The effect on accommodation for vulnerable homeless Australian youths is expected to be minimal.