

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(363) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services

Senator Cash asked:

What issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance is the Department currently addressing. What steps is it taking to address these issues?

Answer:

The Department addresses issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance by promoting respect, fairness, inclusion and a sense of belonging for everyone. These issues are addressed through the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program.

Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP)

The Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (incorporating the former Diverse Australia Program and the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security community grants) aims to provide opportunities for all Australians to participate in the community and contribute to Australian Society. This program supports initiatives that promote respect, fairness and a sense of belonging for everyone through projects that address cultural, racial and religious intolerance. It also includes projects which aim to build the resilience of specific communities who are under significant pressure because of their culture or religion.

On 15 February 2010, the government announced that 28 community organisations would receive more than \$1.2 million of community grant funding under this program in 2009-10.

Further information on the Department's community grants, including funded project examples, can be found at <http://www.harmony.gov.au/funding/community-grants/>

National Community Engagement Strategy under the International Student Strategy of Australia (ISSA)

Currently, the DSCP is also used to support community engagement for international students. On 29 October 2010, the International Student Strategy for Australia (ISSA) was announced and is a whole-of-government strategy developed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

As part of ISSA, the Department has put aside \$750,000 over two years (2010-11 to 2011-12) from existing funding under the DSCP for a community engagement strategy.

The community engagement strategy will support activities that involve international students in community life. The strategy will also promote best practice in community engagement and enable the development of local partnerships for involving students with the broader Australian community.

Projects will help to meet identified student needs through developing tailored solutions to specific issues facing students in particular locations.

Further information

A broader outline of what the Department is doing to promote the benefits of a united and diverse Australia is provided at QON No: 364 (Senator Cash).