

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(445) Program 5.1: AMEP / Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees**

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. What support programs does the Department run for new migrants?
  - a. What do these programs include?
  - b. What is the take up rate for these programs?
  - c. Are they tailored for specific cultural groups or just general programs?
  - d. What feedback has the Department received about the success of these programs?
  - e. What ongoing reviews or reassessments does the Department perform in relation to these programs?
2. What programs run by other parties does the Department contribute to?
3. How much total funding is provided to third-party programs each financial year?
4. What assessment criteria do these programs have to meet to receive funding?
5. Does the Department perform ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of these programs once they are funded? If so, what are the criteria for assessment?

*Answer:*

1. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship funds a range of settlement services aimed at assisting eligible new migrants including humanitarian entrants as soon as possible after arrival. These services focus on building self-reliance, developing English language skills and fostering connections with mainstream services.

Detailed information, in response to the questions raised on these settlement programs and services, is provided below

#### Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy

- a. The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) provides initial, intensive settlement support to newly-arrived humanitarian clients. Services provided through the IHSS include: initial information and orientation assistance; assistance in finding accommodation; a package of goods to help humanitarian clients establish a household; information and assistance to access services such as health services, Centrelink, Medicare, Education, English language and links to social and community groups; and if required, short term torture and trauma counselling. IHSS services are generally provided for around six months, but may be extended in particular cases.
- b. In 2009-10 a total of 12 578 humanitarian clients were assisted under the IHSS.

- c. Service providers determine the level of IHSS assistance provided to clients, based on a needs assessment.

Delivery of the IHSS programs are assessed on a case by case basis and are tailored to achieve the most effective initial settlement outcome by taking into account cultural differences.

- d. The Department's comprehensive Quality Assurance (QA) program monitors the effectiveness of IHSS services. This QA program has consistently found that IHSS services are delivered in a timely and reliable manner and that services are of a high standard that meet the contractual requirements governing the IHSS program.

The Department also conducts regular Client Contact Visits designed to gather feedback from clients on the quality of IHSS services and identify any service gaps at the local level.

- e. A review of the IHSS was undertaken in preparation for a new program to deliver initial settlement services when existing contracts for IHSS service providers end in 2011.

#### Settlement Grants Program

- a. The Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funds services which help eligible clients, who have arrived in the last five years, to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival.

The funding priorities of the SGP are determined through an annual assessment of settlement needs. This approach ensures that the services provided through the SGP are targeted toward those communities and locations in greatest need of settlement assistance and responsive to changing settlement patterns and needs.

- b. In 2009–10, there were 328 SGP projects operating in all state and territories and most statistical divisions with a high concentration of SGP clients.
- c. While SGP services are general in nature, some activities may be tailored to specific groups where those groups are identified as having specific needs which are not able to be met through generalist services.

SGP projects focus one or more of the following service types:

- Orientation to Australia: focusing on development of life skills, referrals and casework
- Developing Communities: assisting emerging communities to become more cohesive and viable; and

- Integration – inclusion and participation: fostering greater interaction with the broader Australian community through employment projects, sports, volunteering, etc.
- d. The department receives continuous feedback on the success of its programs through ongoing interactions with a range of stakeholders. These include Settlement Networks which incorporate local, state/territory and federal agencies, the settlement service sector, and local community groups. The department also consults regularly with relevant peak bodies, advisory bodies and reference groups representing the settlement sector such as the Settlement Council of Australia, the Refugee Council of Australia, and the Refugee Resettlement Council.
- e. Following an performance audit of the SGP in 2009, the department has engaged ARTD consultants to develop an approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the SGP. The evaluation will focus on projects from 2009-10 funding round including multi-year grants, and aims to:
- provide DIAC with indications of the program’s cost-effectiveness;
  - gather evidence about what is being achieved by the program; and
  - identify possible improvements to the program; and inform future directions with settlement services.

During 2009-10 the Department piloted a number of housing/accommodation projects through the SGP. These projects were evaluated through service provider interviews and client focus groups to determine the impact of the program in assisting clients to achieve sustainable housing outcomes.

The evaluation identified the need of housing services to continue under the SGP to facilitate settlement of clients. This issue will be considered as part of the development of alternative service delivery models under the SGP.

### Complex Case Support (CCS)

- a. The Complex Case Support (CCS) program delivers specialised and intensive case management services to humanitarian entrants whose exceptional needs extend beyond the scope of core settlement services such as the SGP or IHSS. The CCS program is designed to work in partnership with settlement and mainstream services to address the often significant barriers these clients face in settling in Australia.
- b. In 2009-10 there were 556 cases referred to the program with 429 cases being accepted. From 1 July to 5 November 2010, there have been a further 155 cases referred to the program with 110 accepted for the provision of services.
- c. To be accepted into the CCS program the needs of the client must relate to settlement and be sufficiently complex or intense that they fall outside the

scope of other settlement programs or mainstream services. The intensive case management nature of the program will take into account the cultural background of clients to achieve the most effective outcome

- d. Feedback received indicates that the program has filled a gap in previous service arrangements and provided valuable case managed services to clients with complex needs.
- e. The Department is currently undertaking a review of the CCS program. The Department seeks to obtain client feedback when they exit the CCS program. All cases refused for CCS are assessed by a separate assessment officer.

#### Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

- a. The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) supports the economic and social participation of eligible migrants, including humanitarian entrants, through the provision of settlement focused English language training.
- b. In 2009-10, more than 60 per cent of those migrants eligible to access the AMEP registered in the program. The registration rate varies according to visa type with 90 per cent of humanitarian entrants, 55 per cent of the family migration stream and nearly 41 per cent of the skilled migration stream registered in the program.
- c. The AMEP uses a national curriculum that is delivered flexibly and is sensitive to the different cultural and linguistic needs of clients. AMEP clients are encouraged to learn at their own pace, in a manner appropriate to their needs. Learning options include classroom tuition and home study. Additional tuition is available to humanitarian entrants with limited education or difficult pre-migration experiences, such as torture or trauma.
- d. An ethnographic study of AMEP clients undertaken by the AMEP Research Centre over 2008-09 revealed that AMEP client satisfaction with the program is generally high and that the topics and themes delivered in AMEP classrooms were found to match closely with issues and routines encountered in early settlement. The AMEP also provides a vital source of friendships and networking, assisting in combating isolation, as well as affording social support and information at a crucial time in the settlement process.

Additional tuition under the AMEP to assist clients make the transition into the workforce or vocational training has been positively received. A review of 1047 participants undertaken in 2009 found that more than half of these people progressed to further education and training and about one third gained employment.

- e. Performance is monitored through mechanisms such as regular contract management meetings, data verification exercises, quality assurance

processes and feedback from clients. Service providers are required to provide quarterly and annual reports against key performance indicators.

The National ELT (English Language Tuition) Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) monitors the delivery of the AMEP nationwide under a contract arrangement with the department. NEAS conducts an annual accreditation review of the AMEP Service Providers.

In 2008 the department conducted The English Language Skills Program Review which considered all aspects of the AMEP, in particular, whether the program is meeting the needs of its clients. The recommendations of the review have informed the development of a new AMEP business model which will be implemented in 2011 following the finalisation of a tender process that is currently underway.

2. The Department does not contribute to programs run by other parties.

Organisations funded under the Department's programs to deliver the appropriate settlement services to new migrants under the IHSS, SGP or AMEP enter into a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth, represented by the Department.

The Funding Agreement outlines the terms, conditions and obligations of funding, service delivery, accountability and reporting requirements for both the Department and the organisations concerned.

To apply for funding under these programs, organisations are expected to consider a range of information provided on the department's website, during the programs' tender or application processes, to ensure that their applications are consistent with the aims and priorities of the programs.

3. Not applicable. Refer to response to question 2.

4. Not applicable. Refer to response to question 2.

5. Not applicable. Refer to response to question 2.