

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE:

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 OCTOBER 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(SE11/0320) Program 4.3: Offshore asylum seeker management

Senator Cash asked:

What is the cost per person per day for families and unaccompanied minors in community detention?

Answer:

At this point in time, it is not possible to accurately calculate a per person per day cost for the Community Detention program.

Over the past 12 months the program has undergone a period of rapid expansion, and the costs incurred to date include a higher proportion of establishment costs. These include securing leases, purchasing and installing household goods, connection fees for utilities and recruitment of additional staff to support the increase in client numbers. Costs also depend on the number and types of clients in the program and the complexity of their needs.

The program is continuing to expand with the ongoing placement of all women and children and their families into community detention. The Department is also continuing to place a small but steady flow of single, vulnerable, adult men in community detention. Once the program stabilises, calculations of average costs per client can be more meaningfully derived.

The cost of the program for the 2010-2011 financial year was \$17.3 million. The cost of the program for this financial year, as at 31 October 2011, is \$25.4 million. Of this amount, \$23.9 million is administered expenses and \$1.5 million is for departmental expenses.

The Department continues to work in partnership with the Australian Red Cross to ensure that value for money is delivered, while ensuring that clients receive services commensurate to their needs.