

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 15 October 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(SE12/0620) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash (written) asked:

Supervision and Welfare of Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors - What is DIAC doing to address the concerns of service providers that inadequacies in its age assessment processes are resulting in serious deficiencies in determining care and support arrangements, physical and mental health assessments, appropriate education or training support and access to youth services?

Answer:

Over the last two years, in consultation with a range of stakeholders including the Australian Human Rights Commission, Commonwealth Ombudsman's office and the Minister's advisory council, the Department has developed and implemented an age determination process which combines a focused interview along with the assessment of any available information. This approach has considerable support from stakeholders, noting that age determination in this context is recognized internationally as a complex and imperfect science. The Department agrees that it is important to establish whether a client is under or over 18 for appropriate placement and care arrangements in alternative places of detention and community detention and, in the context of settlement, access to age-appropriate services.