

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 November 2013

#### IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

#### (SE13/0160) PROGRAM – Internal Product

Senator Ludwig (Written) asked:

Have any briefings and/or provision of information have been provided to the Australian Greens? If yes, please include: (a) How are briefings requests commissioned? (b) What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing. (c) Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information. (d) Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the requests were and why it could not proceed. (e) How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings/information requests for the Australian Greens? How many staff were involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

*Answer:*

Yes.

- a) It is standard practice for high profile visitors, including Members of Parliament and Senators, to be provided with an information brief ahead of their visit to an immigration detention facility.
- b) Senator Lee Rhiannon – visit to Sydney Immigration Residential Housing on 17 October 2013.
- c) General information on the relevant facility and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection contact details (refer to Attachment A)
- d) No.
- e) This information brief took two hours to prepare. Two staff were involved in the preparation of the brief (1 x APS5 and 1 x EL1).

**Sydney Immigration Residential Housing  
(SIRH)**

**Visit by:**

**Senator Lee Rhiannon**

**17<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

**DIBP Contact Details:**

**Contact officers:**

XXXXXX  
Ph: XXXXX

**Attendees**

Senator Lee Rhiannon  
XXXX

## **Media access to immigration detention facilities**

The department's media access policy provides opportunities for accredited media representatives to enter immigration detention facilities for the purposes of general reporting on the facilities' operation and status. Deeds of agreement must be signed by both the media entity (editor, executive producer or similar) and each of the media representatives seeking to enter the detention facility. Not all requests can and/or will be met for a range of reasons, including operational and security priorities.

These deeds must be downloaded, completed, signed and returned to the department's National Communications Branch prior to any media access being considered.

Further information on media access can be found on the department's website at <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/media-access/>

## **Client confidentiality**

With regard to IMAs, there is an even greater need to protect their privacy, particularly while they have ongoing claims for protection. The department routinely reminds official visitors of their responsibility not to identify (either visually or through release of personal information) asylum seekers and people in immigration detention. It can endanger their families overseas and cause issues with processing their claims.

## **Escorted by DIBP or Serco staff**

Visitors must be escorted by DIBP or Serco staff through the compound at all times.

## **Appropriate footwear**

Please ensure you wear fully enclosed and stable footwear to site to avoid injury. Due to the redevelopment of VIDC and the demolition of buildings after the April disturbance, many areas on the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre site are construction zones and many pathways are unsealed.

## **VILLAWOOD IDC & SYDNEY IRH**

Address – 15 Birmingham Avenue, Villawood NSW, 2163 (via Miowera Road only)

### **DIBP Staff**

The department has officers onsite at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre (VIDC) and Sydney Immigration Residential Housing (SIRH) for detention operations, removal of people in detention from Australia, and for case management activities.

### **Site Location**

The facility is located at 15 Birmingham Avenue in Villawood, a western suburb of Sydney approximately 27 km from the CBD and 500 metres from Leightonfield Railway station (2 km from Chester Hill Railway Station). Entry to the facility is via Miowera Rd.

### **Immigration Residential Housing**

The SIRH was opened in 2006. While located on the same site, it is separate from VIDC.

The SIRH has a regular use capacity of 24 beds and a contingency capacity of 48 beds. It provides an enhanced range of alternative and flexible detention arrangements. The SIRH comprises four single-storey duplex houses, or eight units, each consisting of three bedrooms, three bathrooms, shared kitchen and laundry with two living and dining areas.

Each duplex is fully self-contained to enable independent living, with landscaped outdoor areas allowing some level of privacy without impeding security.

One duplex is built to accommodate people with impaired mobility. There is also a communal visits and recreation area as well as an administration office.

Security cameras and alarms provide discreet security and the SIRH is surrounded by a typical suburban fence, allowing it to blend with the residential environment. The backyards are integrated into a single large landscaped area.

### **Services**

#### **Education**

English language lessons and computer classes are offered in the SIRH and tailored to suit the individual needs of the clients including minors. The SIRH also has a library on site with many children's books and games available.

All school age children residing in the SIRH attend local schools. Non-school age children are offered the opportunity to attend play groups. A robust programs and activities schedule also ensures that social and developmental needs of the children are met.

### Medical Facilities

Medical services for people accommodated in SIRH are delivered on site by IHMS or through referral to external providers as required.

### Recreation

Clients accommodated in the SIRH may elect to attend at least three off site recreational activities per week. These activities are decided based upon the input provided by the residents via a dedicated Programs and Activities Officer.

In addition to regular daily scheduled offsite recreational activities, there are also a full range of onsite activities which cater for all demographics including scrapbooking, beading, art and craft sessions as well as children's activities such as treasure hunts, jumping castles, sports carnivals, and bike games.

### Religion

All clients in SIRH have the opportunity to request weekly visits to celebrate their faith and a scheduled program runs to nominated Churches, Mosques and Temples. Arrangements are also made within the shared facilities to respect individual observance and festivals.

### Visits

Public visiting hours for the centre with prior notification are between 8am to 10pm (seven days a week).