

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21-22 MAY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE12/0422) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash (L&CA 112) asked:

In the event that an asylum seeker runs up, for example, a phone bill that is several thousand dollars on the host's phone line, how will the money be recovered if the person has already left the home?

Answer.

Guests are provided with information on responsible phone usage through the *Community Placement Network (CPN) Homestay Information for Bridging Visa E Holders* guide, the *CPN Homestay Rules* and the *CPN Guest Fact Sheet*. These documents encourage guests to purchase a phone card, to request permission prior to using their CPN host's phone, and to reimburse CPN hosts for the costs of all calls made on this phone.

CPN hosts are provided with training on responsible phone management prior to hosting a guest. CPN hosts are encouraged to explain responsible phone practice to guests, including rules for using the home phone and directions on purchasing a mobile phone or phone card and using a public phone. CPN hosts may choose to install an international call block or password on their phone to prevent unwanted usage.

The experience of Australian Homestay Network (AHN) with over 10,000 international student placements has been that situations of phone overuse have been extremely rare. When they have occurred, such situations have been managed on a case by case basis by AHN. CPN do not expect phone overuse to be a major issue when hosting asylum seekers. However, they will continue to monitor the issue.