

Tabled by Serco
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Bringing service to life



**Opening Statement to the Joint Select Committee on
Australia's Immigration Detention Network**

Derby, Western Australia

7 September, 2011

David Campbell

Chief Executive Officer, Serco Asia Pacific

Thank you and good afternoon Chair and Committee members. For logistical reasons I was unfortunately not able to join you on Christmas Island for your first interaction with Serco so I would like to take the opportunity today to make a brief opening statement. As the Chief Executive I am ultimately responsible for Serco's services. I am conscious that our Managing Director, Chris Manning also made an opening statement yesterday so I will keep my remarks concise.

We first attended a market briefing with DIAC in early 2006 and were immediately attracted to the government's new service delivery model, where asylum seekers ^{needs} would be at the heart of the service. This aligned beautifully with our decency agenda, which ^{helps} to ensure we treat people with dignity and respect. This starts with simple policies like operating centres in a more open fashion and ensuring our staff actively engage with people in their care to foster positive and open channels of communication. Before tendering for any work with governments we will assess whether it will provide us with the ability to make a positive difference, and in the case of immigration services we could see that that opportunity existed. We could never have imagined back in 2006, or when we signed the contract in June 2009, or even when we commenced operation in late 2009, the extraordinary growth that would occur with the number of sites more than doubling to 23 and the number of clients growing from 1,200 to a peak of more than 6,500.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the extraordinary job our people are doing. Their commitment to making a positive difference is what connects them with Serco's work cross the globe. I do hope that as you toured the centres on Christmas Island on Monday and as you toured Curtin this morning, that you had the opportunity to meet with some of our staff to see their passion and commitment firsthand. While it is rarely publicised, our people are greatly respected and trusted by the people in our care. I've received a number of positive letters and feedback from clients as I've travelled to each of the immigration sites. While providing immigration services is extraordinarily challenging, especially in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, I see it as an ~~honour~~ and privilege to provide these services. ^{to clients} Many of the people in our care are some of the most vulnerable in the world and I do recognise that in providing these services we carry a great responsibility.

Serco's values-based approach means that we are constantly assessing ways in which we can improve the high standards of service we aspire to deliver. Working closely with DIAC, we have made significant improvements to the systems, processes, and culture across the immigration network. It has not always been easy and there is scope for further improvement. However, I believe it is a credit to the company and our people that despite the complexity and vast challenges, our resolve to deliver on our promises to the government has never weakened.

As today's hearing is in Derby it is important that I conclude my opening statement by making just a brief remark about Curtin Immigration Detention Centre. Curtin opened under Serco's responsibility in June 2010. During my first visit to the centre I was very aware of the challenges our team was facing in establishing a centre from nothing, in a remote location, with particularly basic infrastructure. Now, almost 14 months since the centre opened I'm astounded by what Serco and DIAC have achieved together. Just one example of this is that in September Serco will offer 681 meaningful, structured activities for clients every week. Many of these activities are ongoing and have resulted in outreach beyond the borders of the centre where our clients and staff are providing support to the Women's Resource Centre by assisting with maintenance, establishing gardens, servicing sewing machines, and making clothing and curtains for the centre.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions at Curtin of DIAC, the AFP, WA Police, IHMS, and our sub-contractors. I would also like to extend a special thank you to the people of Derby for their hospitality. I welcome this inquiry and thank the Committee for the opportunity to be involved. We look forward to receiving the findings of the Committee to further engage in continuous improvement, ensuring the delivery of high quality services, based on a humane and dignified approach.

Thank you.