

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/132) - Legacy case-load - Bond returns - Programme 2.1: Citizenship

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA 89) asked:

Senator McKIM: When, and under what conditions, would the bond be required to be returned, and when and under what conditions would the bond be forfeit?

Mr Wilden: The bond would be returned once the obligation has been met. The obligation is that the applicant does not access working-age payments during the first 12 months. In the event they access working-age payments—

Senator McKIM: Sorry; what is a working-age payment?

Mr Wilden: I would have to check with DSS on the definition. I colloquially would have called it unemployment benefits, in a previous life. The working-age payments are basically that. Given the primary goal of this is to get people here and enable them to join the workforce and participate, in the event that they are unable to do so, and the community cannot support them, or the sponsor, and they do access those payments, then any, if you like, debt run up is taken down out of the assurance of support, and the rest refunded. In the event that they do not access the working-age payment, then—I would have to check whether it is at the end of the first year, or at which period—they would be refunded their assurance of support.

Senator McKIM: Could you take that aspect on notice, please?

Mr Wilden: Yes, and I will advise, too, that the actual assurance-of-support process and program is administered by DSS and DHS.

Answer:

The Department of Social Services has overall policy responsibility for the assurance of support scheme. The scheme is managed by the Department of Human Services. Under the Community Support Programme, the assurance of support bond will remain in place for 12 months. Any available amounts will be refunded at the end of that period.