

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 February 2004

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(68) Output 1.5: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Bartlett (L&C 64) asked:

Are you able to give me a slightly more precise definition of the type of visa held by people on Nauru, and whether there is a copy or a detail of it that we can get hold of?

Answer:

Nauru special purpose visas (SPVs) have been issued pursuant to Nauru immigration law to asylum seekers at the Offshore Processing Centre.

A copy of a SPV (dated 30 July 2003) is attached.

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(69) Output 1.5: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Bartlett (L&C 65) asked:

Provide details by gender and adult and non-adult for people on Nauru who are on antidepressants or sleeping medication.

Answer:

As at 19 February 2004, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) advised that thirty three residents (thirty men and three women) were being prescribed antidepressants and twenty five men were being prescribed sleep medication. No minors were being prescribed either antidepressants or sleep medication.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(70) Output 1.5: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Bartlett asked:

(1) The number of refugee interviews conducted on Nauru and Manus Island with minors unaccompanied by a parent at the time of interview, broken down by:

- (i) Financial year.
- (ii) Gender.
- (iii) Age at interview.
- (iv) Nationality.
- (v) Language.
- (vi) Which of the 5 grounds claimed for refugee status.
- (vii) Location of interview.
- (viii) Decision.
- (ix) Length of time between refugee interview and resettlement of minor (in months).
- (x) Resettlement outcome by country of resettlement.

(2) The number of appeals and applications for judicial review lodged by or on behalf of minors unaccompanied by a parent at the time of interview, broken down by:

- (i) Financial year.
- (ii) Gender.
- (iii) Age at date of appeal.
- (iv) Nationality.
- (v) Language.
- (vi) Which of the 5 grounds claimed for refugee status.
- (vii) Forum of appeal or other challenge.
- (viii) Grounds of appeal application for review.
- (ix) Decision/outcome.
- (x) Length of time between appeal and outcome.

Answer:

(1) Normal practice is that interviews of asylum seekers are conducted with the adult members of family units rather than accompanying children. Minors seeking asylum are usually not interviewed unless they are travelling without the company of an adult relative. Where related minors travel without adult relatives the older minor is usually interviewed.

There were 13 unaccompanied minors in Australia's caseload taken to Nauru and none taken to Manus Island. The assessment of refugee claims and any associated interviews took place in 2002.

DIMIA systems do not capture in reportable form some of the information requested. Information which is reportable on these individuals is set out below:

The 13 unaccompanied minors were all males claiming Afghan nationality. Two of these minors were found to be refugees and eleven were found not to be refugees. Nine of the thirteen have voluntarily departed Nauru, either to be resettled or return to their homeland. As at 30 June 2002, nine of the unaccompanied minors were aged over 15 years and under 18 years. Four were aged under 15 years.

(2) Judicial review is not available to offshore asylum seekers. Accordingly, there have been no applications for judicial review lodged by or on behalf of minors unaccompanied by a parent at the time of interview.

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ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 February 2004

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(71) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Sherry (L&C 71) asked:

When was the report by the high level task force on settlement services given to the government?

Answer:

The report of the high level task force on settlement services was provided to the government in November 2003.

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ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 February 2004

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(72) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Sherry (L&C 73) asked:

For the financial year to date, provide the cost of the enhancements to the services provided under the household formation support element, the cost of ensuring that new arrivals can access medical care in the first two weeks of arrival, the cost of providing new arrivals with advice, training and information on issues such as care of rental properties and property management and the cost of providing new arrivals with a phone card.

Answer:

The costs of the enhancements to services provided under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS), announced in the 2003-04 Budget, to the end of January 2004 are:

Household Formation Service - increase in value of household goods: \$3,627,000.

Initial Information and Orientation Assistance – access to medical assistance within the first two weeks of arrival in Australia: \$150,200.

Accommodation assistance – tenancy training: \$68,600.

Accommodation assistance – phone card: \$8,300.

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ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 February 2004

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(73) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Sherry (L&C 76) asked:

Do the MRCs themselves pay the costs involved in the problems that were encountered with the computerised settlement client information system?

Answer:

The Department has paid costs involved in technical improvements to the settlement client information system (SCIS) and has provided some technical support to the MRCs, including provision of a helpdesk service. However, we do not know what costs, if any, the MRCs may have incurred to resolve problems encountered with SCIS.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(74) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Sherry (L&C 76) asked:

What was the cost of the national computerised settlement client information system?

Answer:

Expenditure to date on the settlement client information system (SCIS) has been \$473,599 in capital expenditure. An additional \$265,035 was incurred in implementation costs.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(75) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Kirk (L&C 76) asked:

Provide a copy of the discussion paper on the statistical reporting system.

Answer:

The discussion paper, which was distributed to Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and Migrant Service Agencies (MSAs) in January 2004 as a "Draft Discussion Paper", is attached. The "Draft" will be superseded by a final paper, which will be developed in the course of consultations with MRCs and MSAs.

 No of Contacts
with Communities for
Community Capacity
Building XXX

 No of Funding
Submissions for
which assistance
was provided to
Community
Organisations for
Community Capacity
Building XXX

 No of
Communities
accessing Centre's
Resources for
 *Accommodation /
Meeting Facilities* XXX

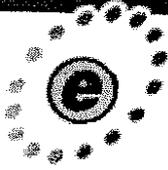
 *Office
Equipment* XXX

 *Other* XXX

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E-Business Systems



Organisation Id: 608
Organisation Name: Assyrian Australian Association

Application Id: N03/1528
Project Title: Casework, Information and Community Educat ...
Reporting Period: JUN-DEC 2003

Case Work

Visa No.	Employment	General Support	Housing	Health	Migration Advice	Citizenship Advice	Other
<input type="text"/>							

Summary of Casework Statistics

No of Clients	XXX						
	Employment	General Support	Housing	Health	Migration Advice	Citizenship Advice	Other
No of Services	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX

Detailed List of Casework Statistics

Visa No.	Employment	General Support	Housing	Health	Migration Advice	Citizenship Advice	Other
<u>A123</u>	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
<u>B123</u>	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
<u>C123</u>	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
<u>CA999</u>	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
<u>CBB1234Z</u>	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
<u>COA1234X</u>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0

DRAFT DISCUSSION PAPER

COLLECTION OF CLIENT STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this discussion paper is to seek comment from MRCs/MSAs about a proposal for the collection and lodgment of client service statistics.

Objectives in reviewing / modifying statistical reporting procedures are:

- to develop a replacement for the Settlement Client Information System (SCIS) which will cease to operate in 2004-05;
- to implement a streamlined method for collection of client statistics;
- to align statistical information DIMIA requires with the outputs and performance measures in the new work program;
- to pilot a system which can be utilised in the new combined grants program in 2005-06; and
- enable production of aggregate data to inform needs based planning.

Background

A recommendation of the DIMIA Settlement Services Review is that the department develop a more robust and integrated client statistical reporting system for DIMIA-funded settlement programs. The proposal outlined in this discussion paper represents the first stage in developing an integrated reporting system. It will be introduced initially to match the transitional work program implemented for MRC/MSA funding in 2004-2005, and will serve as a pilot for the new combined grants program to begin in 2005-06.

Currently, most MRCs/MSAs provide client statistics from the Settlement Client Information System (SCIS), which is operated and maintained within an individual organisation's IT environment. Historically, SCIS was developed with a two-fold purpose:

1. to provide DIMIA funded organisations with an electronic system for maintaining detailed individual client records, group work and community development activities; and
2. to enable organisations to extract and email statistical reporting files to DIMIA.

SCIS was initially released only to MRCs/MSAs, with a plan to provide the system to CSSS organisations in the future. Because MRCs/MSAs have had a range of technical problems with SCIS, the system was never released more widely, and around 10% of MRCs/MSAs have never used it. Other MRCs/MSAs modified the system because it didn't meet their requirements. CSSS organisations have continued to provide client statistics using the Client Service Statistics tables, a series of Excel spreadsheets submitted electronically or in hard copy. It is envisaged that they will continue to use this method until the introduction of the combined grants program in 2005-06, when a new system is introduced.

DIMIA has determined that further development and support of SCIS is not feasible for the following reasons:

- SCIS was not designed to operate in a Windows XP environment. Some MRCs/MSAs have already upgraded to Windows XP, and DIMIA will move to Windows XP by 30 June 2004;
- It has been difficult and resource-intensive for DIMIA to support SCIS remotely, particularly as every MRC/MSA has a unique IT environment; and
- The resources required to support a SCIS-type system for both MRCs/MSAs and CSSS organisations would be prohibitive.

Client Statistical Reporting

The Settlement Services Review also recommended that the department streamline reporting requirements for MRCs/MSAs and for organisations in receipt of CSSS grants. To achieve this, MRC/MSA work programs are being standardised to include clear quantitative performance measures against outputs. A copy of the new MRC/MSA work program is attached (Attachment A). The quantity measures contained in the work program will form the basis for the MRC/MSA client statistical reports, which MRCs/MSAs will submit on a six-monthly basis.

Proposed System Development

The proposed system will predominantly be a statistical reporting system. In view of the Department's experience with SCIS, it is not considered feasible to reproduce a case management facility. The proposed system will comprise two levels of information:

1. Aggregate Statistics

These statistics include client contact data and group service data.

Client contact data as distinct from client casework data would be collected for brief contacts such as counter services where a client might be provided with basic information or referred to a mainstream provider. Data collected in this category would only consist of number of services delivered.

Group service data would record the number of group sessions (such as English conversation classes) and the number of participants in these sessions, aggregated over the reporting period.

2. Individual Client Casework Statistics

These statistics would only be collected about clients where casework (ie one or more consultations of at least one hour's duration) is involved. For individual casework clients, it is proposed that visa numbers are collected by organisations as unique client identifiers. All clients should be able to produce this number from their passport or travel documentation. To

ensure privacy considerations were satisfied, clients would be invited to sign a consent form, indicating their consent to the provision of this information to DIMIA.

The provision of client visa numbers to DIMIA by organisations would enable DIMIA to link with other DIMIA systems, to obtain aggregated information about client characteristics such as country of birth, years of residence, English proficiency, location etc. This information in conjunction with information about the type of services clients are receiving, would enable DIMIA to plan and target services more effectively, which will be important when a needs-based planning framework is introduced in 2005-06. For example, it could indicate that there is a high proportion of recently arrived Sudanese clients with poor English language skills seeking employment services in a particular area.

Collection of the visa number would also enable DIMIA to track clients across settlement programs and facilitate the integration of client statistics as recommended in the Settlement Services Review. For example, it would enable DIMIA to identify whether an MRC/MSA client had previously been in receipt of IHSS services. This would show the extent to which there is continuity and complementarity in service provision.

Collecting the visa number of a client should also be less onerous for organisations than collecting a set of detailed client statistics on each casework client. It would also make it possible for DIMIA to publish, for the sector's benefit, aggregated information about settlement services being provided across Australia. This information would be presented in a form that would protect the anonymity of individual clients.

For 2004-05, DIMIA will develop a facility for MRCs/MSAs to enter and submit client statistics online. This online facility will be co-located with the current online forms for MRC/MSA funding submissions and CSSS applications. MRCs/MSAs will be able to access an online statistic data entry facility via the internet, by using their unique logon ID and password.

Reports submitted online will be automatically loaded into the department's internal Grants Management System (GMS), allowing DIMIA staff immediate access to view funded organisations' data, and produce aggregate client statistics. The online facility will allow organisations to choose how frequently they wish to enter statistics data (eg quarterly, monthly or even daily). Organisations may also be provided with paper tally sheets, to allow them to collect information as clients present, and enter statistics online later. Organisations will also be able to query the statistics they have entered, and run reports showing aggregated statistics for their project. A prototype of the online statistical data entry screens is attached (Attachment B).

The proposal above is based on the knowledge that all MRCs/MSAs have internet capability. When implementing this model for the combined grants program, alternative means for submitting client statistics will be considered for funded organisations without internet capability.

DIMIA will continue to support funded organisations via the Community Programs Technical Helpdesk. Although the helpdesk is currently open only when applications are being accepted, the availability of the helpdesk will increase to accommodate organisations that need help using the statistics data entry system. Written guidelines and an online help facility will also be available.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Is it feasible to collect the data items listed on the attached prototype and can the data be collected reliably?**
- 2. Does the data capture the full range of quantitative measures specified in the new work program?**
- 3. Is there any other aggregated data that could be collected to inform needs based planning?**