

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 FEBRUARY 2008

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

##### **(76) Output 2.1: Settlement Services**

Senator Ellison asked:

Has the department of the government done any work in partnership with the States and Territories to: ensure that culturally appropriate mental health services are available to migrants and refugees, especially within the first two years of settlement?

*Answer:*

All refugee and humanitarian entrants are eligible to receive settlement support under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) on their arrival in Australia. As part of IHSS services entrants are able to access torture and trauma counselling services. These counselling services are designed to address the short-term psychological needs of humanitarian entrants during the resettlement process.

IHSS providers also work with migrant and refugee health centres and local health professionals to provide information on the impact that torture and trauma experiences can have on the mental and physical well-being of entrants.

Entrants with longer-term psychological difficulties are referred on to the Program of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT) administered by the Department of Health and Ageing once they have exited the IHSS program. In the 2007-08 Budget, additional resourcing of \$12.2 million over four years was provided to PASTT to increase their capacity to deliver medium to long-term specialised counselling and related support services to humanitarian entrants.

Under the *Accessible Government Services for All* framework, it is the responsibility of Commonwealth and State/Territory government health services to ensure that their services are accessible to all clients, taking into account cultural and linguistic needs.