

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(183) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network and Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash (L&CA 111) asked:

At each of the detention facilities on Christmas Island and the mainland, are there any problems in relation to unlawful drug addiction amongst the detainees? And if so, the nature of the drug addiction and, if drugs are being used, what drugs they are? How many people are involved, and have there been any incidents in which drugs have actually been found at the detention centres?

Answer:

There have been several instances of illicit drug use in two mainland Immigration Detention Centres over the past twelve months. Illicit drugs include marijuana, various powders, and misuse of prescription and other medication obtained while in immigration detention.

There have been cases of clients entering an immigration detention facility with a history of illicit drug use. In such cases, treatment of the addiction is managed by the Department's Health Services Provider, taking into account the client's clinical history, presentation and the drugs/substances involved.

The Department is not aware of any client developing a drug addiction problem while in immigration detention.

Routine drug testing of clients is not carried out. To manage the supply of alcohol and/or illicit and other drugs within the immigration detention environment, routine property searches are conducted by the Department or the detention service provider. In circumstances where prohibited substances are located, referral to the local police may occur.

From the information available, for the period 1 January 2010 to 4 February 2011, there were potentially 18 cases of illicit substances found within immigration detention facilities (including medication). As these substances are not laboratory tested, however, they cannot be specifically identified. The items are confiscated and subsequently destroyed.