

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(320) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

The Ombudsman advises that the Department was “responsive to comments made in the reports” and “willing to accept advice, learn from mistakes and make improvements”. Please advise what advice has been taken on board?

- a. What mistakes were made and what has been learnt from them?
- b. What improvements were specifically made following a report from the Commonwealth Ombudsman?
- c. Was any additional expenditure required to implement these changes? If so, please provide details.

Answer:

Since October 2008 the Commonwealth Immigration Ombudsman has conducted eight visits to Christmas Island as part of an oversight role of the non statutory refugee assessment process for asylum seekers on Christmas Island. After each visit the Ombudsman has written to the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship with a summary of observations resulting from the visits as feedback to the Department.

In February 2011 the Commonwealth Ombudsman published its oversight report of immigration processes on Christmas Island covering the period October 2008 to September 2010. This report provides a summary of issues from their Christmas Island visits, and a consolidated set of recommendations for the Department's consideration. The Department's responses to the recommendations have been incorporated into the report, which is available on the Commonwealth Ombudsman's website at the following internet address:

http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/files/christmas_island_immigration_detention_facilities_report.pdf

Improvements by the Department in response to this report have been implemented from existing funding.