

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(338) Program 5.1: Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Cash asked:

What programs specifically does the Department utilise or fund to ensure there is viable work pathways for migrants and refugees?

Answer:

The Department's settlement services for migrants, including refugees, focus on building self-reliance, developing English language skills and fostering connections with mainstream services. The objectives of settlement policy are met through a number of programs and services. Many of the longer-term needs of migrants, such as employment, education and health care, are shared with other Government agencies and the community.

A number of settlement programs and services funded by the Department directly facilitate employment pathways:

- The Australian Cultural Orientation Program (AUSCO) is a five day program for all refugee and special humanitarian entrants which covers a wide range of areas, including seeking employment.
- The Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (HSS) provides intensive initial settlement support to newly arrived humanitarian clients. The new program will be delivered through a coordinated case management model. It includes a comprehensive onshore orientation program that strengthens links with other programs and delivers competency based outcomes for clients.
- The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides free English language tuition for family stream migrants, dependents of skilled migrants and humanitarian entrants who do not have functional English. The AMEP's new business model has an increased emphasis on settlement focused English language tuition. Additionally, the role of the AMEP Counsellor will be formally introduced in the new business model. Their role will be to provide AMEP clients with increased support at entry and exit to the AMEP, as well as throughout their tuition, and referrals to other appropriate services, to help clients access further education, including further ESL courses, employment opportunities and generally encourage their participation in the broader community.
- The AMEP provides the opportunity for clients to undertake either the Employment Pathways Program (EPP) or Traineeships in English and Work Readiness (TEWR) initiatives, announced in the 2008-09 Budget. These initiatives assist new arrivals to learn vocational specific English while gaining familiarity with Australian work place culture and practices. To achieve this, clients

participate in workplace visits, simulated work environments and work experience placements. These programs have been incorporated into the new business model as the Special Language Program for Employment and Training.

- The Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funds organisations to deliver settlement services to recently (for up to five years) arrived humanitarian entrants, family stream migrants who have low English proficiency, and the dependants of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas who have low English proficiency. SGP aims to deliver services which help clients to become self reliant and participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival. The SGP provides grants for Generalist and/or Specialist Services, with community organisations developing funding proposals to respond directly to the identified needs of entrants. Generalist services comprise two service types: Orientation to Australia; and Participation in Australian society. Participation in Australia society activities are aimed at encouraging opportunities for new clients eligible for settlement services to be part of the broader Australian community. Activities under this service type can also include micro-enterprise/small-business/cottage industries development—utilizing and enhancing the existing skills of new arrivals - to complement current Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations programs to generate an income.
- The Complex Case Support (CCS) program provides specialised and intensive case management services for refugees and humanitarian entrants with exceptional needs. Where appropriate, clients will be linked into pathways to education, training and employment opportunities.
- The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National provides on-site and telephone interpreting services to assist non-English speakers to access information and services. Telephone interpreting is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The Fee-Free Document Translation Service supports positive settlement outcomes in the areas of education, employment and community participation by providing eligible individuals with fee-free translations of personal, settlement-related documents.