

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(352) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services

Senator Cash asked:

How does the Department evaluate that relevant programs have produced a cohesive and multicultural society?

Answer:

The Department administers a number of programs and services that are designed to improve social cohesion and harmony. Other Government agencies also administer a range of programs that enhance and compliment the broad objective of a cohesive and multicultural society.

Australia's recently launched multicultural policy *The People of Australia*, defines our shared values and cultural traditions and acknowledges that government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of our culturally diverse communities.

In keeping with this, the Department ensures that the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP) is aimed at building stronger community relations to support communities and locations most in need of assistance. This is achieved through ongoing consultation with community groups and State and Territory governments which assist in identifying issues in particular areas and with specific groups.

The Department negotiates work programs with funded organisations in which outcomes are identified and progress against these outcomes is monitored through regular reports.

The DSCP also seeks to establish community partnerships between different communities as this is seen as a fundamental requirement to the success of social interaction and cohesion between communities / ethnicities.

Within DSCP applications, the Department therefore seeks information on the impact of the project on multiple communities and the partnership that those communities develop to deliver ongoing social cohesion benefits.

The Department also undertakes a range of research to develop a sound evidence base from which to inform its portfolio policies and to understand the impact of settlement programs. To this end, the Department is currently finalising a number of research projects on settlement outcomes. This includes research on the settlement outcomes of new arrivals (SONA). The primary purpose of this study was to obtain a better understanding of how newly arrived humanitarian entrants are faring and

which variables contribute to them settling successfully. We are also waiting for final results of a research project on the social, economic and civic contributions of first and second generation of humanitarian entrants. Once finalised, this research will assist all government agencies and key stakeholders as they work together to ensure that programs for humanitarian arrivals continue to be responsive to identified needs.