

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

### **ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012**

#### **IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO**

#### **(AE12/0330) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network**

Senator Abetz (L&CA 114) asked:

What date was the initial answer to Parliamentary Question on Notice 673 asked by Senator Abetz on 30 May 2011 sent to the Minister's Office? Were the descriptors in relation to the contraband altered in any way from the initial draft to the answer that Senator Abetz received? What is meant by the descriptors: smoking implement, non-prescribed medication and non-permitted item?

*Answer:*

The descriptors are entered in departmental systems by the detention service provider at the time the item was confiscated, as required under the contract. Where the detention service provider locates an item they suspect may not be permitted under Australian law, it would be confiscated and referred to authorities.

The detention service provider is not qualified to test substances to determine whether they are benign or illegal. When reporting these items, the detention service provider uses a term that broadly describes the item without making a judgement as to its actual composition.

Prior to finalisation of PQoN 673, the Department changed the original service provider descriptor 'medication' to 'non-prescribed medication' to more accurately reflect that it is only medication which has not been prescribed to a particular individual that is not permitted. Where an item was not defined at the time it was reported, the descriptor was consistently changed to 'non-permitted item' instead of 'other' or a blank entry.

The Department's response to the Parliamentary Question on Notice (PQoN) 673 was sent to the Minister's Office on 12 October 2011.