

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0401) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

Is the department aware of any convicted criminals who are employed either by Serco or other service providers and worked or currently work in detention centres? What kind of police and background checks are conducted on potential employees?

Answer:

Under its contractual requirements Serco must ensure that all personnel undertake an Australian Federal Police (AFP) background check and undergo additional checks every year of employment. In addition, if potential employees will be working with families or minors a 'Working with Children' check must also be in place.

Prospective Serco employees who have returned an adverse Australian Federal Police check are vetted as part of a review process by the Department. Under the services contract Serco is required to refer any offences or issues identified in the AFP background check to the Department's Regional Manager.

The Department considers each situation on its merits. Consideration is given to individual convictions and offences to determine the likelihood of a negative impact on the person's character or any demonstrated risk to the safety of clients. Factors considered also include the nature of the offence relative to the work being undertaken and whether the employee fully disclosed the offence during pre-employment checks.

In addition, Serco also conducts reference, medical and psychometric checks as part of its extensive recruitment process.