

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0434) Program 5.1: Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Michaelia Cash asked:

In relation to the inspection of properties for HSS clients, has the department reviewed the remaining 100 properties out of the targeted 540? Provide the details of the four properties identified as unsuitable.

Answer:

The national accommodation audit initially identified 540 properties in the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy/Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) housing stock. Of the 540 properties listed for inspection, 49 were no longer part of the service providers' pool of available rental properties. Of the remaining 491 properties, clients in 35 properties declined a visit from DIAC, and clients in 22 properties, despite repeated attempts, were unable to be contacted. Inspections were conducted on the remaining 434 properties: 225 visits were for short-term accommodation (STA) and 209 for long-term accommodation.

Details of the four properties identified as unsuitable are provided below:

- In Chester Hill, Sydney: 10 clients in STA were residing in a boarding house with unhygienic conditions, inadequate heating and poor kitchen facilities. DIAC staff informed the service provider of their concerns immediately. The HSS service provider ensured that the clients were re-located and the property no longer used for HSS clients.
- In Townsville, Queensland: a client with a disability was residing in an overcrowded boarding house. The service provider has since secured a rental property for the client.
- In Launceston, Tasmania: a vacant property was due to be tenanted by HSS clients within a week of the DIAC inspection. The service provider was informed that the property should not be tenanted until renovations had been completed. Renovations were successfully completed and the property has since been tenanted.
- In Ringwood, Melbourne: an STA property was identified with problems mainly due to storm damage, which had not been reported to the service provider. Following consultation with the service providers, the clients were promptly re-located to more appropriate accommodation.