

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2007

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(110) Output 2.1: Settlement Services

Senator Hurley (L&CA 25) asked:

Is feedback on the regional program sought from the general community, i.e. the man in the street?

Answer:

The capacity of a regional town to provide a welcoming environment is a key factor in considerations about establishing humanitarian settlement in new regional areas. When such an initiative is being developed, a local steering committee or network is developed with a broadly inclusive membership that represents a wide range of sectors within the local community. Given the nature of regional towns, members tend to be well aware of broader community sentiments and concerns and can provide this perspective in planning activities. For example, representatives from local education providers, churches and key community groups would generally be involved.

An evaluation of the Regional Humanitarian Settlement Pilot in Shepparton, commissioned by the Department in late 2006, found a very high level of community support for the initiative and identified this as one of the key factors in the pilot's success to date. Evaluations planned for future regional settlement initiatives will consider levels of community support and any impact this has had on successful settlement.