

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 May 2007**

**IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO**

**(65) Output 1.2: Refugee and Humanitarian Entry and Stay**

Senator Nettle (L&CA 80) asked:

Provide an update on the identification unit in Afghanistan. My understanding of it was that it was about checking the identification of Afghan asylum seekers in Australia. We were talking before about the levels changing over time; are they continuing to do that now, and is there a need?

*Answer:*

The Identity Checking Unit (IDCU) in Afghanistan was established in 2004, within the Afghan Ministry of Interior. The IDCU was established with initial funding from Australia, through the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It has been very successful and has attracted additional donor support from the Governments of Belgium and Denmark. The IDCU conducts identity investigations on behalf of countries other than Australia. However, as the key donor country Australia has been given priority in investigations. The current program funding expired at the end of June 2007.

Since the opening of the IDCU in February 2004, approximately 106 claimed Afghan adults from Australia and Nauru have requested identity investigations to support their claims of Afghan nationality. Of these, 101 people were found to be Afghan nationals; 4 people were initially found not to be Afghan nationals but upon further investigation Afghan nationality was confirmed; as at June 2007 one identity investigation was still underway. As at 27 June 2007, there was no significant caseload of people claiming to be Afghan nationals for whom identity checks are necessary.