

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 MAY 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(60) Program 5.1: Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Humphries asked:

(1) In relation to the Special Preparatory Program (SPP) for certain humanitarian clients who need extra time to learn English because of trauma or disrupted education: those over 25 are entitled to only 15 hours per week, and those under 25 are eligible to up to 20 hours. Can you please advise of the reason behind the limit placed on older clients?

(2) Also, why can't clients choose the level of intensity of their tuition according to their self-perceived capacity to learn English?

Answer:

(1) The limit is imposed on the older clients to ensure that those who have suffered difficult pre-migration experiences such as torture and trauma are able to be slowly introduced into a formal learning environment and develop relevant learning skills. The lower intensity also gives these clients time during the working week when they can attend medical, settlement or other support appointments.

(2) The SPP assists disadvantaged clients by providing additional hours of English tuition in a supportive environment. The purpose of the program is to assist clients to settle into the learning process and develop learning skills. Clients in the SPP can choose the intensity of their learning in conjunction with their Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) counsellor up to the limits of 20 hours for those under 25 and 15 hours for those 25 and over. If a client feels that they no longer require the additional support provided by the SPP and want to learn at a higher intensity they can move into mainstream AMEP classes.