

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0735) Program 5.1: AMEP / Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Cash asked:

Afghans have a different settlement experience compared with most other cultural groups including poorer English skills and lower qualifications levels. Has the Department undertaken work to identify why this is so? If yes, what work has been done, if not, why not?

Answer:

The recently released *Settlement Outcomes of New Arrivals* (SONA) report describes the settlement outcomes of Afghans in several areas, including English language proficiency and qualification levels. Caution should be taken when interpreting the findings of birthplace groups in the report due to the small sample sizes of these groups and the varying gender and age profiles of the groups. The Afghani sub-group in the report did not contain an equal proportion of males and females, with one male respondent for every four female respondents. The higher proportion of females in this birthplace group will have influenced the findings for this group in areas such as English language proficiency and qualification levels.

An Interdepartmental Working Group with the Departments of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Immigration and Citizenship, Human Services, Prime Minister and Cabinet and Centrelink has been established to strengthen the understanding of education and employment outcomes of our clients. In addition, the Department is developing an Afghani community profile to better understand what their needs are and what factors are driving their settlement outcomes.

The Department will be undertaking a longitudinal survey, commencing in late 2012, of humanitarian entrants to better understand settlement needs, and the impact of government services that assist humanitarian entrants to settle into the community.