

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(89) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Kirk asked:

What steps are being taken to prevent attempted suicides by detainees?

Answer:

On arrival at immigration detention, all detainees are assessed for risk of suicide and self harm. Any detainee showing signs of a mental health disorder is referred to the professional health team.

At Baxter Immigration Detention enhanced screening of detainees using the internationally recognised mental health instruments (by staff trained in their use) is currently being implemented. The instruments to be used are the clinician rated Health of the Nation Outcomes Scale (HoNOS), the client rated Kessler 10 (K 10). The HoNOS and K 10 are widely used in mainstream mental health services. The K 10 in particular is very well validated in different cultures and available in many languages. This screening will be implemented in all facilities by early 2006.

A detainee deemed to be at risk of suicide is placed under regular observation and may be moved to a safer location in the facility. On the recommendation of health professionals, a detainee at risk of self-harm can be moved to a specialist mental health facility, if that is deemed to be in the best interests of their health.