JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION NETWORK *Q42*

Alternative Detention Arrangements

Question: How many families and unaccompanied minors have been moved into community detention? Over what period? Where are they? What is the cost per person per day of these arrangements? Do they have case managers? Are they departmental or contracted third parties, such as the Red Cross? What is the role of third parties in managing these cases? At what cost?

Answer: Between 1 January 2008 and 18 October 2010, 236 individuals (64 adults and 63 children and 109 unaccompanied minors) were moved into community detention.

Prior to the Minister's announcement of 18 October 2010 (regarding the expanded use of community detention for unaccompanied minors and vulnerable families) there were 29 individuals in community detention, 18 adults and 11 children (as at 14 October 2010).

Between 18 October 2010 and 27 July 2011 1601 individuals (823 adults, 514 accompanied children and 264 unaccompanied minors) have been approved for community detention:

- 1504 individuals (769 adults, 486 accompanied children and 249 unaccompanied minors) have been moved into community detention
- 69 individuals (30 adults and 25 children and 14 unaccompanied minors) were approved for community detention but granted protection visas before they moved into community detention
- 28 individuals (24 adults and 4 accompanied minors) have been approved by the Minister and are in the process of moving into community detention

It is anticipated that the costs of the community detention program for the 2010-11 financial year will be $15.734 million. This figure will be confirmed once the department's financial statements have been finalised and signed off by the Australian National Audit Office.

The costs incurred to date reflect the high initial costs for the program (such as securing leases, connection fees for utilities and provision of household goods in each property). These initial costs are higher than can be expected for future financial years due to the expansion of the program from around 50 clients in January 2011 to over 1500 in June 2011.

As such, a cost per person per day equation would not accurately reflect the costs for community detention at this point in time.

Clients in community detention are allocated a departmental case manager, like any other client in immigration detention. The departmental case manager is the client's contact point with the department and works to resolve the client's immigration status.

The department has contracted the Australian Red Cross to provide care and welfare to clients in community detention. Clients are also supported by a case worker supplied by either the Australian Red Cross, as the contracted lead service provider, or a sub-contracted agency. The department's requirements for the care of clients in community detention are contained within the contract with the Australian Red Cross. The key requirements are:

- accommodation is sourced which is suitable to client's needs;
- accommodation is furnished according to the standard household formation package;
- client is provided with a financial allowance;
- client has access to health services facilitated, including mental health as required;
- client is supported to enrol children at schools, use public transport and amenities, and linked with community groups and other providers as required;
- a client care plan is prepared for every client outlining their needs and support;
- monthly reports prepared for each client/family group;
- all incidents that occur while in community detention are reported to the department.

In relation to unaccompanied minors the Australian Red Cross is required to provide 24 hour live in support and care, in addition to the points above.