



Premier & Cabinet

2014-84358

Dr Abigail Groves
Inquiry Manager
Legislative Assembly, Public Accounts Committee
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

7 MAR 2014

Dear Dr Groves

I write in response to your recent letter concerning questions on notice, which emerged from the Public Accounts Committee's hearing relating to the Settling of Humanitarian Entrants in NSW.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission have worked together to produce the following joint response to the committee's five questions. Additionally, we have identified one minor correction to the committee's draft transcript.

If you require any further assistance in relation to these responses from either DPC or the CRC please contact:

- DPC - Ms Janet Schorer, A/Executive Director, Communities and Social Investment Group, 9228 4984 or janet.schorer@dpc.nsw.gov.au
- CRC - Ms Martina Nightingale, Policy Analysis and Development Manager, 8255 6715 or martina.nightingale@crc.nsw.gov.au

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the committee with further information on this issue.

Yours sincerely



Chris Eccles

Secretary
Department of Premier and Cabinet



Hakan Harman
Chief Executive Officer
Community Relations Commission

1. Consultation undertaken to inform the review and reconstitution of the NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee (GISPC)

In June 2012 a steering committee was formed to review the composition of the NSW GISPC and its terms of reference. The review sought to ensure the NSW GISPC had the responsibility and authority to be the central point for developing and implementing settlement policy and planning in NSW.

Membership of the review committee included representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the Community Relations Commission (CRC) and the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services (DTIRIS).

In conducting the review the steering committee consulted with a range of government stakeholders including:

- The NSW Department of Education and Communities
- The Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- The NSW Division of Local Government
- The NSW Department of Families and Community Services (Housing, Community Services, Ageing Disability and Home Care)
- NSW Health
- NSW Fair Trading
- NSW Police Force.

In addition the CRC discussed the findings of the Auditor-General's report with groups and organisations in its broader contact network including:

- former Select Council on Immigration and Settlement (SCIS) Senior Officials Group
- CRC's ten Regional Advisory Councils
- CRC's three Multicultural Coordinator's Forums
- CRC's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Working Party
- Settlement Services Coalition
- various multicultural networks attended by CRC staff.

2. Progress to date in establishing accountability and cross-Government collaboration in the GISPC

The first meeting of the NSW GISPC is scheduled for 3 April 2014. This meeting will provide agencies with an opportunity to formally endorse the terms of reference and develop a work plan, which will set out timeframes and milestones engaging with other levels of government including Commonwealth agencies and NSW local government organisations.

Future meetings of the NSW GISPC will include representation from the Commonwealth and local government. This will enhance collaboration and communication across all levels of government. The committee will also provide a forum through which the various levels of government can clarify roles and responsibilities in the settlement process and improve accountability.

3. Membership of the GISPC

The Secretary of DPC, Mr Chris Eccles, sent out letters to NSW agencies requesting executive-level nominees to participate in the NSW GISPC. NSW agencies that were asked to nominate a representative include:

- o Department of Education and Communities
- o Department of Family and Community Services
- o DTIRIS
- o Division of Local Government
- o Ministry of Health
- o NSW Police Force
- o NSW Treasury.

After the first meeting of the committee, letters requesting nominations will be sent to relevant Commonwealth agencies including the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Department of Education, Department of Employment, Department of Health and the Department of Social Services.

4. Initiatives and programs to provide interpreters

Premier's Memorandum, M2011-06 Language Services Provision in Multicultural NSW, specifies that government agencies are expected to fund the provision of language services (interpreting and translating) when dealing with clients in order to provide all clients with access to government services.

The CRC continues to advocate for government agencies to improve access to interpreters and translation services where gaps in this service are identified. Translating and interpreting services are promoted at the CRC's Regional Advisory Councils and through the broad range of interagency meetings facilitated or attended by CRC staff. Agencies with significant contact with the public are required to report on their use of translation and interpreter services in Multicultural Policies and Services Program reports.

5. Reporting of issues/outcomes that arise from the provision of services to humanitarian entrants (additional question)

The CRC has asked government agencies to report on the services they provide for humanitarian entrants in their Multicultural Policies and Services Program reporting. This reporting reflects the Commission's legislated responsibility to measure our State's response to multiculturalism.

The 2013 CRC Report identifies 17 initiatives for humanitarian entrants. This showcases programs, services and projects that might be relevant to other agencies. The initiatives themselves also assist clients to settle into a new environment.

Transcript clarification – Ms von Helle, p16, paragraph 4:

'New South Wales manager...' should read 'NSW/ACT Director, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Group, Department of Social Services.'