

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2008-2009**

(General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4)

Portfolio - Citizenship

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING THE HEARING**

#### **Community Relations Commission – SUDANESE MIGRANTS**

##### **Committee Chair to the Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Citizenship and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts –**

Minister, can you advise what funding has been allocated and what strategies have been introduced by you to assist Sudanese immigrants and refugees to integrate into New South Wales society?

##### **ANSWER**

The Community Relations Commission through the investigative powers of Sections 13(c) and 15 of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* conducted a major investigation into the significant barriers being encountered by newly arrived humanitarian entrants from Africa. The resulting report, entitled *Investigation into African humanitarian settlement in NSW*, was delivered in June 2006.

This is the only major initiative by any jurisdiction in Australia on this issue and has served as a major catalyst for action by the Commonwealth to respond to the growing issues.

Government agencies are required to address the needs of all communities, including the Sudanese community, in their Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement planning. Issues concerning the settlement of African communities have been raised by New South Wales government agencies for a number of years. There are numerous examples of successful government initiatives targeting the African, and other, communities that are documented in the Annual Community Relations Report tabled in Parliament.

The initial settlement of immigrants and refugees is an Australian Government responsibility. The Community Relations Commission has been advocating on behalf of African communities to improve settlement services for a number of years.

There is a high concentration of Sudanese people in Coffs Harbour. The Commission has organized information sessions on law and order issues for the Sudanese community in Coffs Harbour. The local magistrate, local police commanders, senior Legal Aid Officers and a significant number of the Sudanese Community have been involved in the sessions.

The Commission has also organized major African Cultural Awareness Forums in Newcastle, Blacktown and Coffs Harbour to promote greater interaction between the African community including the Sudanese and service providers as well as the mainstream community.

In addition, the Commission has appointed key members of the Sudanese community to most of its Regional Advisory Councils where there is a high concentration of Sudanese people. The Advisory Councils discuss and address issues to facilitate the integration of all newly arrived people including the refugees.

### **Community Relations Commission – REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS**

#### **Committee Chair to the Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Citizenship and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts -**

What is the budget for regional advisory councils?

#### **ANSWER**

The total budget for the Community Relations Commission's Regional Advisory Councils for 2007-08 was \$109,000 which includes sitting fees for Regional Advisory Council members, airfares and travel expenses for the Commissioners who chair the meetings.

### **Community Relations Commission – SETTLEMENT OF NEW MIGRANTS**

#### **Committee Chair to the Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Citizenship and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts -**

1. Do you know what the proportion is of new migrants or new citizens of New South Wales who settle outside the metropolitan area?
2. Do you have a policy of encouraging migrants to settle outside the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong?
3. Has there been an evaluation of it, and the break-up of migrants coming into metropolitan areas, compared to non-metropolitan areas in, say, the last couple of years?

#### **ANSWERS (1-3)**

It is difficult to ascertain the number of new migrants settling outside the metropolitan area as, generally speaking, the Australian government does not determine a person's place of residence, and while an individual may initially settle in one location they may move for employment, family or cultural reasons.

The New South Wales Government does not have a policy of encouraging migrants to settle outside the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

The New South Wales Government launched the *Drive for Talent* program in 2005 and this has resulted in an increase in the number of highly skilled business migrants coming to Sydney and New South Wales.

The Rees Government supports the development of a more rigorous and consistent methodology across Australia to achieve consensus on the areas that should have access to concessions under migration programs. This methodology will benefit New South Wales as it will deliver solutions better targeted to the individual demographic characteristics of particular areas.

### **Community Relations Commission – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

**Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Citizenship and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts -**

When did the grants in respect of 2008 receive the ministerial signature?

### **ANSWER**

The approval was received by the Commission on 24 December 2007.

Virginia Judge, MP  
**Minister for Citizenship**