

NATIONAL COMMISSION OF AUDIT

SUBMISSION

Department of Immigration and Citizenship Contracts.

The current situation is not conducive to the implementation of new Government Policy to Clear Labor's 30,000 Border of Failure Backlog.

Relevant Terms of Reference:

- **Ensure taxpayers are receiving value-for-money from each dollar spent**

Removal of recruitment agencies will result in a saving of \$180m+. At present there are a number of recruitment agencies contracted to provide consulting services to immigrants. It appears that this funding is producing an employment rate of 5% over the past 5 years which is unacceptable.

There will be many consequences beyond this. The Immigration Department's figures, released last year, revealed that five years after arrival the rate of employment - not unemployment but employment - of Afghans was 9 per cent, while 94 per cent of Afghan households received Centrelink payments. From Iraq, 12 per cent were employed while 93 per cent of families received Centrelink payments. Overall, households that came under the humanitarian program had 85 per cent receiving Centrelink payments after five years. The family reunion cohort had 38 per cent, and skilled migration 28 per cent.

Greg Sheridan, The Australian, June 8, 2013

- **Eliminate wasteful spending**

This matter relates to the point above. Also, as immigrants do not receive information on the Australian Way of Life until citizenship 4 years after arrival. This not only results in costly duplication nor does it provide an integrated and consistent Australian Government message to all *new* arrivals.

- Identify areas or programs where Commonwealth involvement is inappropriate, no longer needed or **blurs lines of accountability**

Many programs for immigrants are conducted by service providers with a vested interest. From our research there are blurred lines of accountability, duplication of services, and lack of accountability in providing necessary and crucial information to new arrivals. This includes knowledge of Australian culture, behaviours that are

required to like harmoniously in our society and inclusion into work and their local community.

We believe Local Government, which is audited, would be a more efficient funding mechanism as they are on-the-ground, in all local communities across Australia. They are a 'Branch Office' freely available to the Federal Government. e.g. 'Road to Recovery' funding is a good example of the efficiency of funding transfer.

- **Improve overall efficiency and effectiveness with which government services and policy advice are delivered.**

When people find it difficult to settle into our country and know the norms of our society, in turn they will become isolated and marginalised and will not become productive and contributing members of the nation. Both Australians and new arrivals often view each other with trepidation bordering on fear, which makes for a troubled situation.

An integrated program, to be delivered by existing service providers and minimising duplication, would deliver an efficient and effective outcome and provide significant savings to the budget.

Children are Australia's future and are especially vulnerable because of their experiences prior to arrival and their lack of emotional literacy and resilience. Currently this issue is inadequately addressed and is a cause for concern.

Attachment:

Copy of immigration contracts for 2012 with potential savings highlighted.