

Question on Notice

No. 166

Asked on 9 March 2021

DR AMY MACMAHON asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION

With reference to support for the 53 refugees recently released from Kangaroo Point—

Will the Minister advise (a) if the government will (i) fund the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) program beyond the end of this financial year, (ii) increase funding for the ASRA program for the 2021-22 financial year and (b) what other emergency measures the government is putting in place to support these 53 recently released refugees?

ANSWER

The Federal Government has sole responsibility for immigration matters, including immigration policy and border control, visa grants and conditions, and policy, funding and delivery of settlement support programs.

As a result of Federal Government decisions, there are significant gaps in support for vulnerable people seeking asylum, including some people released from Department of Home Affairs' immigration detention programs, and the Queensland Government has been stepping in to provide support.

I recently met with Communitify Queensland and partner organisations delivering the Queensland Government funded Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program and I am aware they are facing a difficult situation with the sustained high demand for emergency relief and case management support from vulnerable individuals and families, due to releases from detention by the Federal Government.

The requirement for additional emergency assistance and support is a direct consequence of a Federal Government decision. Under the *Queensland Multicultural Policy: Our story, our future*, the Queensland Government has made a specific commitment to support refugees and people seeking asylum, including by reducing barriers and creating opportunities for them to participate and contribute to all aspects of life.

Since 2017-18, the Queensland Government has provided \$4.688 million to Communitify Queensland to deliver the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program including financial, case management and mental health assistance to people seeking asylum and vulnerable refugees on temporary visas in Queensland.

The department is continuing to engage with other Queensland Government agencies, particularly in relation to support options for people released from the Kangaroo Point Place of Detention and Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation, as well as people released from community detention in late 2020.

Following the release of people from community detention in late 2020, Queensland Government agencies have provided short-term assistance in areas such as emergency housing, mental health and access to legal services.