



NT Detention Operations community update

Assistant Secretary's report

Friends,

I have just marked three months since taking up responsibility as DIAC's Regional Manager (North), which includes our detention facilities in the NT. The time has passed rapidly (my father used to say that there are still 60 seconds in every minute – it just seems to go quickly).

I want to thank the many people who continue to visit the Northern Immigration Detention Centre (NIDC) and the Darwin Airport Lodge, to meet with our clients and provide them with support. Every person who does so, whether for legal counsel or pastoral care, programs, activities, advice or company, is touching a life in a very tangible way.

I met with an Australian man last Saturday, who originally came from Iran. He catches up with groups of detainees at the NIDC regularly and is able to get alongside them, talk to them in their language, empathise with their concerns about family back home, and follow up matters of concern in a practical way.

Only time will tell the great benefit your investing in peoples' lives in this way will have. Your presence, wisdom and encouragement to those you meet with makes a very real difference. Many of you are also involved in external excursions organised for our clients. I want to thank everyone who does so; you enrich their lives – perhaps more than you realise. Please continue this important work.

Community Consultative Group (CCG) meeting

On 13 October, Air Marshall Ray Funnell AC (Retd) chaired a meeting of the CCG. There were more than 30 people in attendance. DIAC, Serco and IHMS provided updates about recent trends, including facilities changes, numbers of clients in detention, released into community detention, or granted protection visas. I have had opportunities to meet with many CCG members and other community representatives on a one-to-one basis since then. I find a great sense of warmth and a desire to work closely on behalf of clients in detention.

Wickham Point Immigration Detention Centre (WPIDC)

On 3 March 2011, the Australian Government announced the expansion of immigration detention accommodation on the mainland. The announcement included the decision to lease a new detention facility at Wickham Point. Work has been under way for some

months, and the first compound has just been handed over to DIAC (November 7).

Accommodation for clients will be spread across three separate compounds, which are being built in stages. Each compound will have its own support amenities, including areas for education, internet facilities, libraries, religious worship, and recreation rooms.

The facility will be operated by Serco. Full support services, including case managers, mental health support teams, medical staff and interpreting services will be available at Wickham Point.

DIAC is aware of the potential for local services to be affected. For this reason, primary health services for clients at WPIDC will be provided by International Health and Medical Services (IHMS), which is contracted by the department to provide these services across the detention network. IHMS will provide all health care services, with the exception of emergency or specialist care. The department funds the NT Government and external providers for additional services.

The Government is concerned to ensure that the department minimise the impact on the local community and continue to work closely with law enforcement and other emergency services in the Northern Territory. Planning is well under way to ensure the centre is ready for cyclones or flood surges.

Plans are under way to organise familiarisation tours by representatives of the NT Government, relevant industry groups, community stakeholders, emergency services, media and others, before clients are transferred to the facility. Invitations are going out.

It is expected that the first detainees will move into WPIDC from early December.

New Deputy Regional Manager

Allow me to introduce Mr Adam Tonkin, the new DIAC Deputy Regional Manager, who is working as Centre Manager in our Darwin facilities. Adam relocated to Darwin with his family a few weeks ago and will be in this role for the next year. I know he is keen to meet all of you during the coming weeks and months.

Finally, the end of the year is on us again. I want to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas-New Year period and a profitable 2012.

Allan Davis

Meeting the faces of NT Detention Operations

Interpreter Liaison Team



John, Christina and Divi from the Interpreter Liaison Team

The Interpreter Liaison Team (ILT) is responsible for the day-to-day management of interpreting services to service providers, and meeting DIAC's contractual service requirements in the immigration detention environment.

The ILT has four members who coordinate interpreters at the Darwin Airport Lodge (DAL), DAL 3 and NIDC. The ILT liaises with a number of organisations and provides interpreters, often at short notice, for internal stakeholders (Serco, IHMS and DIAC), as well as external stakeholders (Ombudsman's Office, Australian Red Cross, International Organization for Migration and other visitors to Darwin immigration detention facilities). Currently there are 39 interpreters covering 11 language groups at the Darwin facilities.

Concert by Volunteers

On the evening of 13 October, a group of 15 volunteers, assisted by interpreters, performed for clients at the NIDC. Many clients' moods lifted during the performance as volunteers played a keyboard and guitar, and sung to the clients. DIAC would like to thank Kevin McCarthy and Doug Capp for organising this event, as well as all the volunteers who performed.

Visits by Shi'a Imams

In early September, DIAC arranged for two Shi'a Imams from interstate to visit Darwin. Imam Abdul Razak, an Arabic speaker from Melbourne, and Imam Hussein Hussein, a Hazaragi/Farsi/Arabic speaker from Perth, visited all the Darwin immigration detention facilities. Shi'a Muslim clients were very appreciative of the time these religious leaders were able to spend with them in prayer and counselling. Another visit is being arranged in the near future.

Footprints Football (Soccer) Competition



UAM clients at the Footprints Competition

The Footprints Football Competition was held on 21 and 22 September, with an invitational team of 16 and 17 year old clients from DAL and Berrimah House coming a credible second. Life Without Barriers staff organised and coached the team, and provided support over the competition. The team convincingly defeated Kormilda College White and Red, but were beaten 4 -1 in the final by a strong St Johns side. The teams were evenly matched until late in the second half when three goals in quick succession sealed the victory. Behaviour and sportsmanship by all teams on and off the field was exemplary throughout the competition. It is hoped clients can participate in more community competitions in the future.

Vietnamese Moon Lantern Festival



Clients participating in the Moon Lantern Festival

On the evening of 12 September, Vietnamese clients at the DAL, assisted by staff from Life Without Barriers, celebrated the traditional Moon Lantern Festival. Popular Vietnamese foods were available, with traditional singing and dancing including a colourful Unicorn Dance performed by clients. The festival was open to DAL clients of all backgrounds, with the Vietnamese clients entertaining around 100 clients from other backgrounds.

DIAC stakeholder engagement

If you would like any information about the department or its operations, or have any suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us via email at: nt.corporate.nidc@immi.gov.au, and mark to the attention of the Executive Officer to the Regional Manager.