

**Opening Statement to Legal and Constitutional Committee
Budget Estimates hearing
Parliament House, Canberra**

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**Andrew Metcalfe
Secretary, Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

Check against delivery

Good afternoon Madam Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to deliver a short opening statement.

Firstly, I thought it may be useful to the committee if I am able to briefly take you through our new outcome structure following changes made to reporting arrangements as part of the *Operation Sunlight – Enhancing Budget Transparency* measures.

As you will be aware from our Portfolio Budget Statements 2009-10, we now have six outcomes, a change from the two outcomes in recent years. The formerly described ‘outputs’ are now reported as ‘programs’, and most programs are divided into two: ‘service delivery’ (which deals with issues around processing activity) and ‘policy advice and program design’.

The six outcomes are described on page nine of the portfolio budget statements and tables describing the transition from the 2008-09 outcome/output reporting structure to the new outcome/program structure can be found on pages 23-30. For ease of reference, we have also prepared a free-standing table describing our outcomes, programs and divisional responsibilities which may assist the proceedings today—I am happy to table this.

I will give a couple of topical examples of where our activities sit within the new structure.

The migration and temporary entry program, previously output 1.1, helpfully remains program 1.1 – Visa and Migration, and is split into 1.1.1 in relation to service delivery and 1.1.2 in relation to policy advice and program design. These programs are both under outcome one in the new structure.

Refugee and humanitarian entry and stay, previously output 1.2, becomes program 2.1 – Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance, under outcome two. Again the program is split into service delivery (2.1.1) and policy advice and program design (2.2.1).

Border security, previously output 1.3, becomes program 3.1 – Border Management, under outcome three. This includes the new administered item on combating people smuggling.

Immigration law enforcement and compliance activities, previously output 1.4 becomes program 4.1, and includes a new budget measure to fund the new directions in immigration detention. It is very pleasing to see the budget has included additional funding for a permanent Community Care and Assistance Program. As you know this program has been successfully piloted over the past three years, and provides for the effective management and resolution of status for unlawful non-citizens in the community through early intervention and provision of needs-based support and assistance.

Immigration detention is now more clearly reported in three separate outcomes. Onshore detention, previously part of output 1.5, becomes program 4.2, and the Illegal Foreign Fishers element is now reported separately as program 4.4. Offshore asylum seeker management, including community and detention services on Christmas Island, is now reported under program 4.3.

The previous outcome two outputs (dealing with settlement, citizenship and multicultural affairs), generally translate directly to programs five and six.

It is worth noting that our major business transformation program, *Systems for People*, is no longer reported separately as an outcome or a program, but is spread across all programs, reflecting the fact that it contributes across all the work of the department.

We will seek to assist the committee to identify the appropriate program for discussion of particular issues throughout today and tomorrow.

Madam Chair, I would now like to introduce to the committee our new Deputy Secretary for Corporate and Client Services, Ms Felicity Hand, who joined us earlier this month, and was most recently working in the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio.

With the indulgence of the committee, I would also like to acknowledge and say a few words of farewell to a senior officer of the department, Nhan Vo-Van, who retires from the Australian Public Service this week after more than 25 years of service. Nhan has been a close colleague of mine throughout that quarter of a century.

Mr Vo-Van's varied roles included working closely with many former and current senators as Parliamentary Liaison Officer to the Senate for two years covering the transition from the Keating Government to the Howard Government, and as head of the Cabinet Office in 1999 and 2000. Perhaps uniquely, he has played key roles at the centre of government in both Australia, and in Thailand, while accompanying his wife on posting there.

Mr Vo-Van also made an outstanding contribution to this department. In 2007, as Assistant Secretary of Parliamentary and Executive Services Branch, he provided excellent support to me, the minister and the parliamentary secretary during the period of the change of government. More recently, Nhan has led our Border Policy Branch, which importantly manages the immigration clearance processing policy at our airports and seaports, the Electronic Travel Authority and Advance Passenger Processing systems and the APEC business travel card.

Nhan has performed his work in the best tradition of the Australian Public Service.

I wish to record my personal thanks and that of the department for Nhan's professionalism and dedication over the past 25 years and wish Nhan, his wife Chulee, and his family the very best for the future.

Madam Chair, committee members would be aware of the death of Professor Jerzy B. Zubrzycki AO CBE on 20 May. I was honoured to know Professor Zubrzycki and represented the department at his funeral on Monday—the minister also attended—and was not only reminded of how he overcame adversity (he was taken prisoner in 1939 before escaping and serving with the Polish underground movement and the Special Operations Executive), but also of the breadth of his influence over Australia's immigration and multicultural policies over some five decades. I would like to briefly mention his work for the record of this committee.

Professor Zubrzycki's work centred on the concept of cultural pluralism, in contrast to the theoretical concepts of assimilation and integration. The 1977 report *Australia as a Multicultural Society* by the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, chaired by Professor Zubrzycki, contained the first definition of multiculturalism, as resting on the three principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity and cultural identity.

Professor Zubrzycki was a strong proponent of 'Australian multiculturalism', recognising that our immigrant history and our unique approach to settlement and cultural diversity had delivered substantial benefits to Australia socially and economically, and was something in which all Australians should take pride. Australia is, of course, a country where now some 45 percent of us are either migrants or the children of migrants.

In later work, Professor Zubrzycki also reinforced the importance of social inclusion. He was passionate in his support for refugees, and played a key role in many community associations.

It is a tribute to his work that these same principles continue to drive much of our work in the areas of citizenship, settlement and multicultural affairs today. On behalf of the department, I record my sincerest condolences to Professor Zubrzycki's wife Alexandra, his family and friends. He was a great man. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and friend to many. He was a great Australian. He will be greatly missed.

Finally, Madam Chair, I put on record my appreciation for the ongoing efforts of all the staff of my department in this period of high policy and operational tempo. Their dedication to our departmental purpose of building Australia's future through the well managed entry and settlement of people constantly impresses me, and they have my thanks for their professionalism and commitment, and strong and positive values.

Thank you.