

**QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE – LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S AGREEMENT WITH MALAYSIA IN RELATION TO
ASYLUM SEEKERS: 23 SEPTEMBER 2011**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(QON 28)

Senator Cash asked (in writing):

[Regarding costs – return of failed asylum seekers] I refer the Department to the statement by the Minister to Parliament in June regarding the costs of transferring and supporting asylum seekers sent to Malaysia, when he said “that does not mean, of course that the Australian government would have some ongoing role – over a long period of time. That would clearly not be the case”. How does this reconcile with the statement by a Malaysian Home Affairs official, that Australia would have to pay to support rejected refugees for however long they are in Malaysia, as well as any future costs for them to be transferred to a third country or flown home?

Answer:

The Arrangement with Malaysia has effect for 4 years from 25 July 2011. It is expected that, once transfers commence to Malaysia, it would be only a short period before boat arrivals cease.

It is expected that most transferees would have their asylum claims assessed and be provided with a permanent outcome during the term of the Arrangement, whether that is resettlement or return to their country of origin.

The Arrangement provides that Australia will bear all agreed costs in relation to transferees. While the bulk of this expenditure is expected to arise while the Arrangement is in effect, there may be some cases where a permanent outcome is not provided to a transferee within that time period and some further expenditure is required.