

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/413) PROGRAMME – 2.1: and 2.2: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

Please provide an update on the Private Sponsorship Pilot.

- (a) How many applications have been received to date?
- (b) How many do you anticipate receiving?
- (c) Will the 500 places which make up the pilot make up part of the 13,750 Humanitarian program or will it be in addition/separate to it? Why/not?
- (d) What level of interest has there been in the pilot from community organisations and individuals?
- (e) Please explain this programme further.
- (f) Was this an election commitment?
- (g) What will it be specifically used to fund?
- (h) If there are less asylum seekers entering Indonesia as a result of the Government's policies, why is so much funding needed to "support regional partners manage asylum seeker populations"?
- (i) Does this funding only go to Indonesia or does it go to any other regional countries?

Answers:

- (a) Since the Pilot commenced in June 2013, a total of 289 applications have been received.
- (b) Interest has been strong but we are unable to anticipate the final number of applications for the pilot.
- (c) Places for the Pilot will be from within the Humanitarian Programme of 13,750 places. The Pilot will be evaluated and the outcomes will assist government to shape a future community sponsorship model.
- (d) There has been considerable interest in the community sponsorship concept from a broad range of individuals and community groups. Approved Proposing Organisations have already received a sufficient number of applications to fill the 500 places available in the Pilot this year and currently have a waiting list.

- (e) The Community Proposal Pilot is a trial to enable communities within Australia to take a greater role in assisting people in humanitarian situations overseas to resettle in Australia. Community organisations, known as Approved Proposing Organisations, are able to identify people to propose for a Refugee and Humanitarian visa, support their application, and if the visa application is successful, help them to settle in Australia. Individuals who settle under the Pilot remain eligible for the same government services as other humanitarian entrants, except for the Humanitarian Settlement Services programme.
- (f) No.
- (g) The Visa Application Charge is not used to fund any specific services. It is returned to Government as consolidated revenue.
- (h) While the government's policies have been successful in stopping illegal maritime migration to Australia and slowing numbers of asylum seekers entering Indonesia and the region, significant populations remain that need to be managed. The Australian government contributes to this.
- (i) Funding to assist regional countries in managing their asylum seeker populations is primarily directed to Indonesia, but is also used to fund similar activities in Papua New Guinea, East Timor and other transit countries in the region as required.