

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 1/1.1

Topic: Immigration Cost Model

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F42

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 30 November 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Please outline the model used by the Department of Finance to forecast the annual cost to the government of managing unauthorised refugee boat arrivals.
- b) Does the model provide a cost per person/per arrival figure for unauthorised refugee boat arrivals?
- c) What is the cost per person for arrivals sent to Nauru?
- d) What is the cost per person for arrivals sent to Manus Island?
- e) What was the cost per person for those processed onshore?
- f) What time periods in detention or assumptions of detention periods are used when developing these costs?
- g) Was costing done per person for resettlement in Malaysia? If so, what was this cost?

Answer:

- a) The Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) has agreed with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) the structure of the DIAC model utilised to estimate IMA costs and, at each estimates update, Finance validates the cost estimates generated by that model.

The current DIAC model is driven by a range of variables such as: the number of irregular maritime arrivals, the number and mix of processing and detention facilities utilised, the occupancy levels of the various facilities, health, interpreter and other service levels, the nature of detention, average processing times and processing outcomes.

- b) The model is not structured to generate a cost per person/arrival for IMAs. In line with the assumptions mentioned in a) above, costs are determined based on aggregate caseloads and flows through the processing system. There are fixed and variable elements to many cost items, many of which are specific to particular detention centres, and even the fixed costs fluctuate across a range of caseload levels.
- c) The cost of the Nauru processing centre has not been determined on a per person basis. See responses to a) and b) above.
- d) The cost of the Manus Island processing centre has not been determined on a per person basis. See responses to a) and b) above.
- e) The cost of the onshore processing and detention network has not been determined on a per person basis. See responses to a) and b) above.
- f) Time periods in detention are not a direct input into the model but are a function of several factors including estimates of positive primary decisions, positive secondary decisions on appeal, positive decisions on judicial review, the number of IMAs returned (voluntarily and involuntarily) and the estimated time waiting for a review of a decision on their refugee status.
- g) No costing was done on a per person basis for resettlement in Malaysia.