

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(154) Program 4.1: Visa Compliance and Status Resolution

Senator Cash asked:

- (1) How many Afghans who have been refused refugee status, either on primary decision or appeal have voluntarily left Australia in 2009-10 and in 2010-11 so far?
- (2) How many have been removed?
- (3) When was the last one removed?
- (4) How many are awaiting removal?
- (5) On average how long have those awaiting removal been held in detention following their negative decision?

Answer:

(1) Persons who arrive lawfully and who remain lawfully in Australia may make their own arrangements for voluntary departure at any time without involving the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. No action is required by the Department if a client makes their own voluntary departure arrangements and the Department does not keep statistics on those cases.

For the above reason the total number of Afghans who were refused refugee status, either on primary decision or appeal, and who voluntarily left Australia in any given financial year is not readily available.

However, the Department does offer an assisted voluntary return service to eligible non-citizens wishing to depart Australia who are unable to do so without some support. The Department has partnered with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to offer assisted voluntary returns.

(2) In 2009 – 2010, two Afghan irregular maritime arrivals (IMA) who had been refused refugee status were voluntarily removed from Australia.

In 2010 – 2011 (as at 28 February 2011), one Afghan Irregular Maritime Arrival (IMA) who was refused refugee status and one Afghan IMA who chose not to have their refugee claims assessed were voluntarily removed to Afghanistan.

(3) As at 28 February 2001, the last person removed to Afghanistan was voluntarily removed in December 2010.

(4) As at 28 February 2011, five Afghan nationals had received a negative review outcome, had not sought judicial review within the appeal timeframe and were subject to removal planning, including pre-removal clearances. By 1 April 2011, this number had increased to 34 Afghan nationals subject to removal planning, including pre-removal clearances. Additional Afghan nationals are expected to become available for removal in coming weeks and months as claims for protection are finalised.

(5) As at 28 February 2011, the average number of days an Afghan IMA client in detention on that date had spent in detention after receiving a negative review determination and not seeking judicial review of that outcome was seven days.