

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### (AE12/0265) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

I refer to QoN SE11/0173 in which it was asked "The Budget Papers state that the Department "aims to improve visa processing times from "around 4 weeks to around 2 weeks" by opening a new processing site in Brisbane and increasing the number of processing staff." In the response received it was states that "the proportion of cases finalised within two weeks has increased from 31.5% in July 2011 to 39.5% in October 2011". What has been the cost to date of opening the site in Brisbane? How many staff are employed there working on 457 visas? What was the proportion of cases finalised within two weeks, as a percentage, in November 2011, December 2011 and January 2012?

*Answer:*

\$1 021 283 has been spent on staffing and \$12 341 on training costs for the Brisbane Centre of Excellence to end January 2012. Additionally, approximately \$75,000 has been expended on the three staff working with stakeholders on increasing the proportion of decision ready applications.

To the end of January 2012, a total of 26.7 staff had been engaged to establish the new processing centre in Brisbane.

	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>
Percentage of visa applications finalised within two weeks of lodgement	51%	40%	53%

Visa subclass 457 processing times are at historically low levels. The current median processing time for an application is 19 calendar days. This represents a 53 per cent decrease compared with 2007-08 and a decrease of 18 per cent from June 2011 when it was 23 days.

It should be noted that public holidays and staff leave impacted on the December 2011 figure.

The outcome for January 2012 is the result of work being done on increasing the proportion of decision-ready applications. This is significant because it will impact on lowering the median timeframe for finalisations.