

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

### **ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012**

#### **IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO**

#### **(AE12/0423) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management**

Senator Cash asked:

What will happen to the Independent Protection Assessment Office (IPAO) and the fifty staff and over 100 independent assessors? Will the office be disbanded? When? Will there be any savings? Will that saving be returned to budget?

*Answer:*

The Independent Protection Assessment Office (IPAO), formerly known as the Independent Merits Review Office, will cease to operate once all cases on hand as at 24 March 2012 have been finalised which is anticipated to be by the end of 2012.

Appointments of independent protection assessors (IPAs) by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship were for a term ending 30 December 2012. All IPAs are employed on a daily fee basis, subject to work availability.

There is a current recruitment round for Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) members. It is open to independent merits reviewers to seek appointment as RRT members.

A large proportion of IPAO staff are employees of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). Workforce arrangements for these staff will be based on the department's obligations under its Enterprise Agreement and the APS Redeployment Guidelines. As the impact is fully worked through, we will be consulting closely with all affected employees and their representatives about how to best manage the implementation of these changes before decisions are finalised, including specific impacts and timeframes.

The RRT's budget for irregular maritime arrival work is being considered as part of the 2012-13 federal Budget but we anticipate the change will be substantially budget neutral.