

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(175) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Ludwig (L&C 115) asked:

So you will you be able to provide those modelling figures as to how many fishers you expect to detain and how many beds you will have available at Baxter in an overflow capacity?

Answer:

The funding provision for the 2006-07 Budget measure *Securing Borders against Illegal Foreign Fishing - detention services* is based on the apprehension of 717 illegal foreign fishing vessels, or 6022 illegal fishers in 2006-07 and 2007-08, reducing to 650 vessels or 5465 fishers a year in 2008-09 and 2009-10.

It is expected that the vast majority of newly apprehended foreign fishers will be detained at, and repatriated from, the Northern Immigration Detention Facility (NIDF) in Darwin. This facility is currently being substantially upgraded to accommodate more illegal fishers. It is expected to be fully operational from mid August 2006 with a maximum capacity of around 480 beds.

Based on the seasonal peaks of illegal foreign fishing activity and depending on the timing of apprehension of fishers and the time to process and repatriate them from Australia, DIMA will need to transfer some fishers to the Baxter Immigration Detention Facility (around 300 fishers per annum) once the NIDF capacity is exceeded. It is anticipated that the seasonal peaks of illegal foreign fishing activity will take place during October/November and April/May each year. Baxter IDF has an operational bed capacity of 700.