

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0202) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Boyce asked:

On the 22nd of March 2011 a document was tabled entitled, "Protection Visa Processing taking more than 90 days for the reporting period 1/7/10 to 31/10/10".

It would appear that in the latest reporting period the number of cases, where it was the Department's responsibility for delays in processing these matters in a timely manner and within their statutory obligations, has more than doubled.

Can you explain in detail why this has happened?

Answer:

The increase mainly reflects the effects of growth in recent years in the non-irregular maritime arrival (IMA) caseload, which stabilised at 2009–10 levels in 2010–11, and the volume of the IMA refugee status determination caseload. Other reasons include the complexity of certain cases which may require legal advice, consideration of serious criminal convictions or investigation of specific issues requiring, for example, updated country of origin information.