

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0207) 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".

Does the failure of the Department to resolve these applications within the statutory time indicate a policy and a process unable to deal with the numbers of applications and the issues they involve?

Answer:

The increase in the number of decisions not made within 90 days 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, for example, legal advice, consideration of serious criminal convictions or other character related issues, confirmation of identity, or investigation of specific matters requiring follow up and research on country of origin information relating to a case-specific issue.