

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 23-24 MAY 2011**

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

#### **(BE11/0628) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management**

Senator Cash asked:

With reference to the incident where immigration officials were forced to take asylum-seekers off a flight from Christmas Island to the mainland after the charter pilot expressed concern some had not passed health checks. Were all 92 asylum seekers cleared for TB?

*Answer:*

All 82 asylum seekers that took the flight from Christmas Island had undergone testing for TB, as applicable to their age (i.e. children under 12 and pregnant women are not given chest x-rays), and had been cleared of active TB.

Twelve others who underwent the same health checking regime, and who were also exhibiting no signs of active TB, were awaiting chest x-ray results to definitively clear them of TB. These were the clients who did not undertake the flight.

Medical advice at the time was that there was little or no risk of these 12 clients having active TB, and therefore had they travelled on the flight from Christmas Island, there was minimal risk that others on the same flight were at risk of being exposed to the disease, or of contracting TB.