

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 27-28 May 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE13/0017) PROGRAM – Internal Product

Senator Cash (L&CA 41) asked:

Question:

Let me refer to one of the great mysteries in answering questions on notice—and don't get me wrong, it was fantastic to get this on Saturday. For example, going to AE0183, the question was:

What has been the blowout in budgeted costs for asylum seeker management from November 2007 to date? What has been the actual total cost, the actual spend by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship on asylum seeker management in outcomes 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6 since 2008-09?

The answer given said:

See answers to AE130016 and AE130017.

I am sure we all know where this is going, because then when you flick through your bundle and you find that those answers have not been provided, I think the obvious question arises. Why? And that is not the only example. I just want to see where the fault lies, and obviously I would like to see the answer to that question, because it is of particular interest to me.

Answer:

The actual costs incurred for the care and management of Irregular Maritime Arrivals over the financial years 2008–09 to 2012–13, are summarised below.

	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
	\$'million	\$'million	\$'million	\$'million	\$'million
Actual expenditure	88.881	253.594	840.497	1 360.929	TBA

Notes:

1. Prior to the 2012–13 financial year, costs incurred for the care and management of Irregular Maritime Arrivals were solely reported against program 4.3, Offshore Asylum Seeker Management. In addition, some non Irregular Maritime Arrival costs were reported against program 4.3.
2. From the 2012–13 financial year onward, the total cost of the care and management of Irregular Maritime Arrivals also includes the costs of sub-program 'Returns and Reintegration Assistance Packages', which is reported under program 4.5 and sub-program 'Refugee Status Determination for Offshore Entry Persons', which is reported under program 4.6. Note: Not all of programs 4.5 and 4.6 are Irregular Maritime Arrival related.
3. Expenditure for the 2012–13 financial year will not be available until the financial statements have been finalised.

The Department has now reviewed its guidance instructions and also its quality assurance processes to ensure that the identified issues with Questions on Notice is more closely controlled.