

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 - 28 May 2013**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(BE13/0082) PROGRAM – 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance**

Senator Rhiannon (L&CA 19) asked:

Senator RHIANNON: I want to move on to the issue of the \$375 million diverted to ongoing costs from the aid budget. Was the identification of the \$375 million as ODA money at the request of the immigration department? Who initiated that classification?

Mr Bowles: This is a part of the budget process. It is probably a question best asked of other departments. Decisions are made around the budget. The reality is \$375 million is a capped amount and it is reflected in the DIAC budget. It is tagged, if you like, as ODA. It is done under the normal OECD Development Assistance Committee's reporting directives. We go through that process.

Senator RHIANNON: When did you learn that this \$375 million needed for onshore costs was to be tagged as ODA?

Mr Bowles: I cannot remember the exact time. It was quite a while ago.

Senator RHIANNON: Could you take that on notice.

Mr Bowles: We will take that on notice.

*Answer:*

The decision to reprioritise \$375.1 million of the Australian aid budget towards the support of asylum seekers living in the Australian community, either under Residence Determination or on a Bridging Visa E, was made by Government on 22 October 2012. The directives governing the use of aid funds promulgated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development were applied in determining the eligibility of the expenditure to be reported as Official Development Assistance.