

**QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

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

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(BE13/0456) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management**

Senator Cash (Written) asked:

When did the Department first receive instructions to return IMAs to Sri Lanka?

*Answer:*

The Department has a legal obligation to remove, as soon as reasonably practicable, all unlawful non-citizens who have exhausted all outstanding avenues and have no lawful basis to remain in Australia. People who do not hold a valid visa and are unwilling to voluntarily depart may be subject to detention and removal from Australia. The Department does not require instructions to do so.