

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 May 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE13/0558) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Hanson-Young (Written) asked:

How much money has been spent so far on flying people back from either Manus Island or Nauru for medical reasons, as at the date of the Department answering this question? How many people have had to be flown back, at the date of the Dept's answering of this question? How long did each of them stay in Australia, as at the date of the Department answering this question? How many of the people were then returned back to either Manus or Nauru once their medical treatment was deemed finished?

Answer:

Since the commencement of the Regional Processing Centres (RPCs) to 28 May 2013, the Department had been invoiced \$712,303 for air ambulance flights from RPC countries to Australia. This figure does not include invoices for air ambulance flights which occurred to 28 May 2013 but have not yet been provided to the Department. This figure also does not include the cost of people returned to Australia for medical treatment utilising commercial airline flights or spare seats on charter flights returning to Australia - these costs are not available in segregated form.

To 28 May 2013, there had been a total of 22 medical transfers from Nauru to Australia. This consisted of 10 medical evacuations by air ambulance and 12 medical transfers by commercial flights or utilising spare seats on charter flights returning to Australia.

To 28 May 2013, there had been a total of 11 medical transfers from Manus Island to Australia. This consisted of three medical evacuations by air ambulance and eight medical transfers by commercial flights or utilising spare seats on charter flights returning to Australia. The figure does not include women transferred to Australia due to pregnancy.

To 28 May 2013, four of the medical transferees had been returned to Nauru RPC and four returned to the Manus Island RPC. In addition, two of the Manus Island RPC medical transferees had been voluntarily returned to their home country.

The average period in Australia for the eight medical transferees who had been returned to the RPCs was 23 days.