

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(159) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Bartlett asked:

Is there a set format of questions that DIMIA officers use during interviews at the airport? Is a question, e.g.: 'Do you need protection from your country/people in your country' asked so as to identify that someone wishes to apply for asylum?

Answer:

Yes.

A standard set of questions is used at airports to interview people refused immigration clearance who may be in need of refugee protection.

The specific question is not asked because it is a closed and leading question. Such a question could be answered yes by anyone wishing to stay in Australia without any understanding of what protection means.

Instead, the Department asks several open questions that are then explored to the level of detail required in each individual case in order to enable Australia to identify people who are raising claims or providing information that prima facie may engage Australia's protection obligations. This process does not require the individual to use or recognise any specific terminology.