

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 30 October 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(180) Output 1.2: Refugee and Humanitarian Entry and Stay

Senator Kirk asked:

How many Pakistani ID documents were used to cancel Afghan visas or question the veracity of Afghan claims? Can and will all of those documents, uncensored be provided? Can and will evidence of how these documents were obtained and invoices for their collection be provided?

Answer:

In maintaining procedural fairness towards clients, if information comes to the Department's attention that gives rise to consideration of a visa cancellation or refusal, the individual concerned is notified and given sufficient opportunity to respond to the concerns held by the Department. It is therefore rarely the case that refusal or cancellation is based upon one piece of evidence alone.

In this regard, the decisions to cancel or refuse the visas of individuals who claimed to be Afghan and were subsequently identified as Pakistani were, in general terms, based upon several indicators that the applicant had provided the department with false or misleading information relating to their identity. In addition, dependant on the individual circumstances of the case, applicants have the opportunity to seek review of their visa refusal or cancellation through the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT), the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT) or Administrative Review Tribunal (AAT).

Unfortunately, Departmental systems do not currently facilitate reporting on the number of visas refused as a result of the applicant being identified as a national of a different country to which they had sought protection. Therefore it is not possible for the Department to provide the Committee with a copy of, or invoices for the collection of Pakistani documents that called into question the identity of applicants claiming to be Afghan nationals.