

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(100) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

In relation to Christmas Island, what is the staff to unauthorised arrival processing ratio? To maintain processing times of 90 days, how many staff hours are required?

Answer:

While there is no statutory obligation to process asylum claims on Christmas Island within a particular timeframe, the vast majority of claims are currently being dealt within about 100 days.

Staff from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship undertake a variety of roles on Christmas Island, including direct client processing, detention operations, case management and community detention roles. As at 6 November 2009, there were 56 Departmental staff and 1178 clients on Christmas Island. This represents a 21:1 client to staff ratio as at 6 November 2009.

A dedicated team of experienced Refugee Status Assessment officers has been established in Sydney, and supplemented as needed from other State or Territory offices. These officers travel to Christmas Island to interview people making protection claims and assess these claims on return to their home office.

There are also staff from other Commonwealth agencies and non-government agencies, such as interpreters, on Christmas Island. They have not been accounted for in the above figure.

Records of staff hours are unavailable.