

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(101) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Further to evidence given at the hearing, what would happen if many boats arrived at once in the next few weeks and the island became full? Would the Department be able to source accommodation at such short notice? If not, where would the asylum seekers go? Would they go to Darwin?

Answer:

Christmas Island can accommodate about 1380 people across a range of facilities and family configurations.

A range of measures is being taken to increase accommodation capacity on the Island to around 2200. This is expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2010.

Contingency planning has been made for the use of the Northern Immigration Detention Centre in Darwin, should accommodation on Christmas Island become fully utilised.